The STRUGGLE *for* POWER *in* ARABIA

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Ibn Saud, Hussein and Great Britain, 1914–1924

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ITHACA PRESS

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Ithaca Press is an imprint of Garnet Publishing Limited

Published by Garnet Publishing Limited
8 Southern Court
South Street
Reading
RG1 4QS
UK

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ISBN 0 86372 216 4

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Jacket design by David Rose
Typeset by Samantha Abley

Printed in Lebanon

For my parents
Abdallah Alangari and Moudi Alyahya

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Acknowledgements

I am greatly indebted to Dr Charles Tripp for his continuous support, encouragement, and the help he gave me in the course of writing this book. I would also like to express my appreciation to a number of scholars who have either discussed, read, or given their valuable advice on parts of my work: firstly, I would like to thank the late Professor P. J. Vatikiotis who helped and guided me until his retirement from the University of London, and Dr Derek Hopwood of St Antony's College, Oxford, who was kind enough to read drafts of my manuscript. I also extend my thanks to Professor Tim Niblock of the University of Durham, who gave me his time to discuss various themes of this study. I am also grateful to Professor M. E. Yapp, who introduced me to British archives on the history of the Middle East, and to Professor Fred Halliday of the London School of Economics. I thank Dr Khalid Alangari, Minister of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia, for introducing me to several Saudi scholars and providing me with some invaluable Arabic sources. Of the Saudi scholars that I have met, I am especially grateful to both Dr Abdallah Al Uthaimeen and Dr Uthman Al Rawaaf of King Saud University who revised earlier drafts of this book. Needless to say, I want to thank my dear parents, Abdallah and Moudi, my brothers and sisters, colleagues, friends and associates for their encouragement and moral support during the writing of this book.

Introduction

The nature of the origin and sources of authority, particularly its relationship to power and legitimacy, are fundamental questions for the study of politics. The means by which a leader wins acknowledgement of his right and capacity to rule, and the criteria by which his associated society decides to support him,[1] are, as Rousseau argued,[2] central to the interaction of state and society. "Governments acquire tools of political influence through the mobilisation of human and material resources for state action."[3] The transactions which determine authority are continuous rather than static, subject to re-evaluation, and affected by a dynamic range of criteria. This book attempts to examine the theoretical processes by which authority is formed, which may then be applied to essential dynamics within this case study.

In the context of early twentieth-century Arabia, as shall be demonstrated, one fundamental source of a leader's authority was the support of his associated society. The singular importance of this criterion in this indigenous context affords a good opportunity to examine the political interaction between a leader and his societal groups. Therefore, the first aim of this book is to consider the internal processes of authority within a society, such as hierarchy, cohesion and fragmentation, which arise from the indigenous ethos and its associated interests and values. This aspect of authority goes to the heart of this book: authority as the interdependence of the ruler and the ruled. Such a definition relates less to Plato's ideal

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1 The right of the ruler which determines his authority, is that which is perceived by society. See R. B. Friedman, "On the concept of authority in political philosophy", *Authority*, ed. Joseph Raz (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 67; hereinafter cited as Friedman, "On the concept of authority".

2 "Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains . . . what could make this legitimate?" Rousseau argued that it was basically the consent to be governed which gave such legitimacy. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, tr. Maurice Cranston (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968), p. 49.

3 See Jacek Kruger and William Domke, "Comparing the strength of nations", *Comparative Political Studies*, No. 19, April 1986.

state and more to Aristotle's "practically attainable" state.[4] It relates not so much to the imposition of prescriptive policy or rules but rather to an examination of the practical function of political leadership. Such a study reveals that the leader's power status is subject to transaction: whether he is democratically elected, or a traditional chieftain, or even an oligarch, his position will always to some degree be affected by the approval and needs of his surrounding society, with its significant organisations and resisting forces, its powerful social actors or chiefs. It is therefore important to scrutinise Arabian social needs and values in relation to general concepts and theories of socially derived power: in particular, to Weber's sociopolitical theories of leadership, and to Hobbes's identification of self-interest as the cohesive essence of the state. Although the time-worn debate over the nature of authority will never be entirely resolved, a specific definition of authority can be reached which applies to this case study.

The second aspect of authority which this book examines is the fact that authority often derives from value systems which are distinct from the social practices and needs which support the leader: namely, *de jure* authority; religious authority, and the religious legitimation of power. Thus, a consideration of religious concepts, titles, and judicial processes will provide tools for analysing indigenous power processes. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the positive connection between religious legitimacy and *de jure* processes of political authority, which are sometimes assumed to be separate sources of legitimacy. Particularly in the Islamic system, the parallel between religious legitimacy and *de jure* authority is that a belief system dictates which form of social control is rightful: pre-established beliefs are used to structure processes of law and order, the controlling practices which endorse the leader, particularly, in his drive to extend his power into the international arena. However, it is very important to distinguish between sources of authority and processes of legitimation and particularly to emphasise that religion functions as a practical basis for power as well as an abstract source of legitimacy. Like other ideologies, religion can stimulate purpose-oriented action such as *jihad*, and thus it provides the leader's means of organising and mobilising

4 Aristotle examined not the ideal government, but that which is practically attainable by most states. See George H. Sabine and Thomas L. Thorson, *A History of Political Theory*, 4th edn (New York, Toronto, and London, Dryden HBJ Press, 1989), p. 107; hereinafter cited as Sabine and Thorson.

resources for war. Religious belief therefore relates to the de facto power of a leader, and should be recognised as establishing control, guiding policy, and structuring the capacity for popular participation in the ruler's cause.

Any study of authority which does not consider its relation to practical power is invalid; thus a third aim of the book is to consider the role of coercion in creating a foundation for authority: to relate de facto power both to authority and to theories of coercion. However, in the context of Arabia, it is very important to remember that coercion is not only associated with the seizure of de facto power, but also with specific forms of *de jure* authority, to legitimising religious practices of coercion. Such religious practices relate to Weber's concepts of legitimate coercion, and reveal a dynamic interaction between social cooperation and the empowerment of the ruler. However, it is also important to distinguish coercion as a finite political tool from coercion as a continuing political resource, a constant "equilibrium of disorder". Under a "conflict model" of society, the social organisations constantly compete for power, unlike a centralised state which regulates, extracts and appropriates the society's resources.

The fourth aim of this study is to consider the ruler's authority in relation to foreign intervention, where rulers shore up their internal social control to survive the ambitions of more powerful players. One influential factor is the concept of sovereignty which is prescribed by a great power ally for its lesser partner. The right of small nations to self-determination was much emphasised in Great Power negotiations following World War I, and determined new international norms for state building in the Middle East.

Such new concepts of sovereignty were also used by Great Powers to impose nationalist goals on leaders and to stimulate small protégés to revolt. Crucially, however, the concept of sovereignty changes from society to society, from religion to religion, and among resistant social forces. According to Islamic proselytism, or pan-Arabism, sovereignty relates to an expanding rather than a defined territory such as the European notion of state. Therefore, disputes over sovereignty in this period were concerned not only with violations of territory, but also with the true limits of sovereignty itself. Such conflicting attitudes to self-determination evidently affected or extended these rival leaders' bids for authority, and as will be seen, Great Powers encouraged the independence of a state

which was not capable of sustaining it through coercive force or social consensus.

The central process explored in this book is that whereby some leaders decline while others survive and flourish in the particular context of Arabian political and social systems. The study is a comparative one, analysing the respective leaderships of Hussein, Sharif of Mecca, and Ibn Saud, the man responsible for the revival of the Al Saud rule in Najd, over three distinct periods before the Arab revolt against Turkey, during the revolt and thereafter. It examines which characteristics of their respective leaderships, which survival strategies and policies, and which changes in the political process or in the distribution of social control, ultimately supported the rule of one leader, while failing to sustain the rule of the other. The specific criteria of comparison are the leaders' respective sources of social, religious and coercive authority and the foreign support they enjoyed in each period. The first section of the case study analyses the respective nature and sources of each leader's authority prior to World War I. The second section follows the transformations in the authority of Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein caused by a period of political catharsis: World War I and the Arab revolt; while the final section considers the reasons why Hussein lost his power in the postwar period, and the political advantages which enabled Ibn Saud's final annexation of Hijaz.

PART I

THE NATURE AND FOUNDATION OF AUTHORITY

1

The foundation of Ibn Saud's authority 1902–13

This chapter considers the bases of Ibn Saud's authority in Najd during the period between 1902, when he recaptured Riyadh,[1] and 1913, when he first deployed his successful coercive force at al-Hasa,[2] establishing a base on the Persian Gulf and acquiring the strategic importance to merit a treaty with Britain. A survey of the interaction of Ibn Saud's government with his society and with external powers depicts the limit of explicit or implicit support which he used to reinforce his authority to become a significant power in Arabia. To attain the scope of leadership he envisioned for himself he needed to create a controlling mechanism of government intrinsic to his society, to create strategies of survival appealing to the social groups competing with him for power and to make them agree with his concept of governance, as an embodiment of his authority.

As with Sharif Hussein, Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud of Najd managed to thrust his way back from powerless exile to establish an initially limited form of rule in a land his family had at one time dominated. The Al Saud had awaited an opportunity to reimpose their rule in Najd since 1891, when Ibn Rashid[3] of Hail had forced them into exile. However, the first

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1 Accounts of Ibn Saud's rise to power are found in: Amin al-Rihani, *Ibn Saoud, Maker of Modern Arabia* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1928); hereinafter cited as al-Rihani; Muhammad Almana, *Arabia Unified: A Portrait of Ibn Saud* (London, Hutchinson, 1980); John Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam: The Ikhwan of Nejd and their Role in the Creation of the Saudi Kingdom* (Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1978); hereinafter cited as Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*; Christine Helms, *The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia* (London, Croom Helm, 1981); hereinafter cited as Helms; Gary Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Saud* (London, Frank Cass, 1976); hereinafter cited as Troeller; A. J. Toynbee, "A problem of Arabian statesmanship", *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs*, 8 (1929), pp. 367–75; hereinafter cited as Toynbee, "A problem of Arabian statesmanship".

2 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 15.

3 The Rashid dynasty (1906–24) is analysed in Madawi al-Rasheed, *Politics in an Arabian Oasis: the Rashidi Tribal Dynasty* (London, I. B. Tauris, 1991).

period of Ibn Saud's rule contrasted sharply with Hussein's, in both the manner of wielding power and the nature of the territory governed. Najd had little commercial, economic, industrial or strategic advantages; no holy cities attracted pilgrim revenue. Ibn Saud could confirm his power only by increasing economic prosperity in order to create social stability and political loyalty, which might attract external support from powerful international actors.

At first Ibn Saud drew upon his dynastic authority to legitimise his use of force and coercion to extend his territory and create a social foundation for rule. Dynastic tradition gave him access to dormant yet potent power structures within the Najdi political system. In his utilisation of dynastic claims, Ibn Saud resembled Hussein, but the grounds upon which Ibn Saud launched his bid for power were narrower than Hussein's: he did not draw heavily on religious authority and he lacked the endorsement of a Great Power. Hussein had been placed smoothly in power as a ruler of defined status in an important religious capital near commercial coastal centres – his rule was immediately supported by the existing dynastic infrastructure of the Hashemite family throughout Hijaz. In contrast, Ibn Saud's bid for power had been nurtured in exile in the British protectorate of Kuwait.[4]

Ibn Saud's first challenge was to find a practical means of launching himself as leader of Najd without any external sanction for his rule other than Kuwait's modest offers of ammunition and refuge. Moreover, he made his bid for power shortly after several unsuccessful attempts by his father and Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait to challenge Ibn Rashid, ruler of Najd. With these handicaps, Ibn Saud's challenge was to project himself as an independent prince of Najd and assert his authority over all of central Arabia.

The legitimacy of his claim to rule was not in doubt. He had a strong hereditary claim and traditional religious status as a Wahhabi imam.[5] However, at the time, such legitimised resources of authority were

4 Fu'ad Hamza, *al-Bilad al-'arabiyya al-sa'udiyya* (Riyadh, Maktabat al-Nasr al-Haditha, 1968), pp. 5–10.

5 The Saudi authorities prefer the term "al-Muwahidun", the "Unitarian Movement". However, as the term "Wahhabi" is in common usage in numerous articles and

overwhelmed by the fact that in central Arabia continual coercive activity was the norm. A number of conflicting social organisations coexisted, round which social interaction, group identity, rival reward incentives, and tribal sanctions were structured. These norms made coercive power the prerequisite for gaining authority. Coercion was necessary because the Al Rashid had complete de facto control of Najd, and were the chosen protégés of the Ottoman empire. The future of Ibn Saud's rule depended on his prevailing over the Al Rashid who were superior in military resources and numbers.

Another political dilemma for Ibn Saud was foreign relations with Great Britain, his only other possible source of outside backing. He needed to find a means of overcoming British apathy to his hegemony which was of no strategic or economic interest to Britain. But the central and immediate problem with which Ibn Saud had to contend was how to establish a broad social support base. Tenacious social elements blocked his aspirations for power. One major handicap was that the Al Saud traditionally lacked the coercive arm of a single associated tribe, whereas Ibn Rashid possessed the regional support of the Shammar tribe and the rest of Imarat Jabal Shammar. In addition to a fighting force composed of the townsmen, Ibn Saud needed somehow to persuade a confederation of tribes to give him personal military backing. He needed to create for himself a coercive arm strong enough to become the tool for transforming his society into compliant, participatory subjects.

However, central Arabia had a tradition of utter factiousness near to the Hobbesian "state of nature",[6] where cohesion became impossible because of the competing interests of very small groups. Despite the

books outside Saudi Arabia, it will be used to refer to the Unitarian Da'wa (Movement). This revival movement centred on the teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, and hence is not a new sect, but a revival of the "true Islam" as Ibn Abd al-Wahhab saw it. For the roots of his doctrine, see Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya, *al-Siyasa al-shar'iyya fi islah al-ra'i wal ra'iyya* (Damascus, Dar al-Bayan, 1985). For information on the Wahhabi doctrine, see Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, *al-Usul al-thalatha wa adillatuha* (the three principles and their proofs) (Cairo, Dar al-Tiba'a al-Yusifiyah, undated). "The leadership of the Saudi Imams provided an alternative to tribal leadership as it derived its ideological foundation from Islam." (al-Rasheed, p. 87.)

6 Hobbes presents the state of nature as the condition of war arising from the natural equality of all humans who compete for resources with mutual distrust. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Indianapolis, Ind., Hackett, 1994), p. 100).

inexhaustible energy with which Ibn Saud composed his social coalitions, he found it impossible to sustain political cohesion among tenaciously independent groups. His implicitly proposed rules of confederated tribal governance were thus at first thwarted. This pattern demonstrates that a society which is a *mélange* of social organisations, with control spread equally between groups, is commonly marked by an environment of conflict,[7] an active struggle for social control. Given this structure of political activity it was hard for one sole leader to take charge, however viable his unifying concept of rule.

Thus, it became increasingly evident to Ibn Saud that he needed to revise the social structure and ideology if he wanted to rule permanently in central Arabia, let alone expand beyond Najd. He needed to fuse effectively state rules with an ideological package of rewards and sanctions to integrate the material and moral interests of his groups. A new system of ideological meaning would enable him to manage his groups, increase his international capabilities,[8] and fulfil the territorial goals of his early vow, "By God, I will explore the country belonging to my grandfather and father from Muscat to Jaalan."[9] Thus he might drive the Ottomans out of al-Hasa, a territory which had been a historical focus of resentment between the Al Saud and the Ottomans.[10]

In 1902, Ibn Saud recaptured Riyadh for the Saudi dynasty, taking the title of amir of Najd. This victory inspired support from the population of the capital who had a tradition of loyalty to the Al Saud,[11] and thus Ibn Saud emerged initially as a ruler with limited authority. The immediate source of Ibn Saud's authority in the first period of rule was absolutely simple: he enjoyed de facto power won with the exceptional force of his military leadership. The function of coercion in Ibn Saud's early rule was that he used it to sustain power.

When Ibn Saud captured Riyadh he possessed a traditional right to rule which he invoked in his take-over. Also, the traditional Saudi–Wahhabi religious alliance provided legitimacy. But popular awareness

7 Eric A. Nordlinger, "Conflict regulation in divided societies", Occasional Paper No. 29, Harvard University, January 1972, p. 7.

8 V. G. Kiernan, "State and nations in western Europe", *Past and Present*, 31 July 1965, p. 240.

9 Residency Records for Bushire R/15/1/745.

10 De Gaury, *Rulers*, pp. 235–8.

11 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 12.

of the Al Saud tradition of rule did not precipitate an initial *coup d'état* on the ideological grounds of their right to rule. Merely, the society had tired of al-Rashid's brutal methods of government.

Ibn Saud attained leadership through the relentless use of force, moving from battle to battle for over ten years, reimposing his control when it shattered. By a sheer, dogged policy of military and tactical excellence,[12] he reimposed Saudi rule in southern Najd. Ibn Saud's initial means of achieving power would prove the decisive tactic in the final contest between himself and Hussein: his first method of obtaining power was the same as that used ultimately to enter Hijaz. Ibn Saud could unquestionably command an effective military arm, or exhibit the authoritative leadership qualities to sustain his control once it was won. There was clear contrast between the old Hussein and the young Ibn Saud. Ibn Saud was twenty-five in 1902; his youth gave him the advantage of physical energy for the next twenty years of military conquest. Ibn Saud's coercive success supports Aristotle's claim that if there can be no authority without tradition, there can be no tradition without authority[13] – Ibn Saud and his central Arabian peers worked from a political starting-point of de facto rather than *de jure* power. They did not use the military threat as the Young Turks did, to impose formal constitutional reforms. Arbitrary Najdi skirmishes led to one tribal leader being replaced by another with a similar political method. In the Najdi society, coercion came first, and in social appeals to major powers, the advantages of alliance emphasised by indigenous leaders were the practical advantages of provision of security.

Significantly, Ibn Saud's early battles were not arbitrary but arose from a focused strategy aimed at consolidating his rule over a broad region. While some analysts perceive revenge as his initial motivation,[14] his use of coercion actually displayed self-discipline and self-control,

12 At the battle of al-Asha'li, Ibn Saud lured the enemy into a false camp in pursuit of booty (Sa'ud b. Hidhlul, *Tarikh muluk Al Sa'ud* (Riyadh, Matabi' al-Riyadh, 1961), pp. 90–1; hereinafter cited as Hidhlul).

13 C. J. Friedrich, "The rational ground of authority", *Tradition and Authority*, ed. C. J. Friedrich (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1958), p. 56.

14 Lawrence Paul Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia, 1902–1932: the development of a Wahhabi society" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1971), p. 37; hereinafter cited as Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia".

for instance, in the repeated mercy he showed after acts of treachery, which contrasted with voracious bedouin raiding.[15] In this period Ibn Saud's coercion exhibited six phases, distinct in political and territorial significance, which also demonstrate a series of assumptions that he gradually revised regarding the use of coercion in central Arabia.

The first phase, the lightning recapture of Riyadh and the easy possession of southern Najd, was seemingly conducted on the assumption that, in Najd, coercion functioned as a finite operation to obtain a finite end. Although the new Saudi realm consisted only of Riyadh, this acquisition represented a foothold. Through several such daring campaigns, using the territories of tribes such as the Qahtan[16] as stepping-stones throughout the south, he next restored Saudi control in southern Najd.[17] Ibn Rashid's response was to retire north-west into al-Qasim after fortifying the northern provinces with heavy garrisons at al-Washim, al-Sudair, and al-Majma'a, which he believed Ibn Saud could not penetrate.[18] To this extent, Ibn Saud had pushed the Al Rashid out of his territory and had experienced no social dissent to his new and limited rule. Coercion thus achieved a finite end, namely, the willing obedience of southern Najd which thus exemplified a consensus model of society.

The second phase of military coercion began in 1903 with Ibn Saud's rapid push through Ibn Rashid's northern fortifications. Al-Sudair and al-Washim provinces fell quickly since Ibn Rashid's garrisons put up little defence,[19] with Tharmada fort secretly evacuating for fear of attack.

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15 Bedouin raided for sport and loot, a system of redistributing wealth (Toynbee, "A problem of Arabian statesmanship", pp. 367–8). "We wake up poor in the morning and retire rich in the evening, or we wake up rich and retire poor." See Hafez Wahbah, "Wahhabism in Arabia: past and present", *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, Vol. 16, 1929, pp. 458–67; hereinafter cited as Wahbah, "Wahhabism in Arabia: past and present". The bedouin and sheikhs used one another for convenience and material gain.

16 H. St John Philby, *Saudi Arabia* (London, Ernest Benn Limited, 1955), p. 240; hereinafter cited as Philby, *Saudi Arabia*.

17 He needed to re-establish control, for example, over al-Kharj, Aflaj, al-Hauta and al-Hariq (Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 31).

18 Shaqra, capital of al-Washim, and Tharmada were among the places fortified (Hidhlul, p. 65).

19 Abdallah al-Bassam, *Tuhfat al-mushtaq fi akhbar Najd wa al-Hijaz wa al-Iraq*, (manuscript in the possession of Sheikh Hamad al-Jassir), p. 464; hereinafter cited as al-Bassam. See also Hidhlul, pp. 65–6.

The third phase of military coercion which began in March 1904, consisting of the long battle for the province of al-Qasim (particularly in Buraida), demonstrated that the application of coercion in central Arabia was a complex issue. Faced with al-Qasim, even the young Ibn Saud was tempted to abdicate his hard-won control – although it was possible that such a stance was mere posturing. His change of attitude was inspired by the lack of consistent support which the people of al-Qasim themselves showed for any leader.[20] Historically, the Al Saud had found it difficult to administer al-Qasim during the Second Saudi Realm (lasting from 1824 to 1891),[21] which was one reason for the Realm's decline.[22] The lack of coherent Qusmani loyalty for either camp daunted both Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud, causing them to retreat, but Ibn Saud quickly recovered and took advantage of the power vacuum to attack Unaiza, owing much to the ferocity of his commander, Ibn Jiluwi. While the Rashidi garrison at Buraida put up some resistance, Ibn Saud forced them out,[23] and thus became master of western al-Qasim while Ibn Rashid held the eastern part, with its capital al-Rass. It seemed that the contentious province had been fairly easily secured, but Ibn Saud's control soon broke down once more.

The fourth phase of coercion, the escalation of the Al Rashid–Al Saud rivalry to the international level, began at the same time. That is, Ibn Saud's military achievements had by then stimulated the intervention of a Great Power, the Ottoman empire, to try to crush him. Ibn Saud's relations with the Ottomans during this period may appear paradoxical because at times he fought against them and eventually annexed their territory of al-Hasa (see above). Indeed, as will be seen below, Ibn Saud's relations with the Ottomans oscillated between hostility and complicity, and were at first not formally established by negotiation or treaty. In fact

20 For example, Ibn Rashid could not rely on the Qusmanis, so in 1904 he went to Iraq to request help from the Ottomans and the Shammar.

21 A. Vassiliev, *Tarikh al-arabiyya al-saudiyya* (Moscow, Dar-al-Taqadum, 1986), p. 223; hereinafter cited as Vassiliev.

22 Amin al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd al-hadith* (Dar al-Jubail, Beirut, 1988), p. 104.

23 Muhammad b. Abdallah al-'Abd al-Qadir al-Ansari al-Ahsa'i, *Ta'rikh al-'Ahsa'* (Riyadh, Matabi' al-Riyadh, 1960), p. 202; hereinafter cited as al-Ahsa'i, *Ta'rikh al-'Ahsa'*.

when the Ottomans backed Ibn Rashid as their main protégé, Ibn Saud fought against the Ottomans either indirectly (since Ibn Rashid sometimes had the support of Ottoman forces) or directly (when the Ottomans sporadically challenged territories or tribes under his rule). As Ibn Saud's power grew and the international tensions mounted and developed into World War I, the Ottoman empire in 1914 engaged in a secret treaty with Ibn Saud,[24] but by that time he adhered to or ignored the conditions of alliance as it suited him in order to court an alliance with Britain.

Ibn Saud's initial struggle for al-Qasim brought about the first bid for control outside his traditional power base, through an international power, for Ibn Rashid received a large contingent of Ottoman reinforcements from Iraq, and returned towards Buraida within striking distance of Ibn Saud. The Ottomans' ultimatum to Ibn Saud warned that a formidable force awaited orders from the caliph, and demanded that he cease opposing Ibn Rashid. Although fully aware of the odds against him, Ibn Saud responded with the defiant reorganisation of forces for a counter-attack which proved the decisive test of all three forces bidding for control of central Arabia, culminating in mid-July 1904 in the battle of al-Bukhairiyya fought midway between Hail and Buraida, which was as important for the future of Najd as the fall of Riyadh. There was great disparity in the forces of Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid since the latter had Ottoman might behind him. Ibn Rashid received eight regular battalions from the Ottomans. His other forces were Hutaim, Harb, Utaiba, his own Shammar tribe and many Hail townsmen. Saudi forces were from Riyadh, al-Qasim, al-Kharj and the Mutair. Despite overwhelming odds, Ibn Saud humiliated the Rashid–Ottoman alliance, partly as a result of the low morale of the deprived Ottoman troops which scattered.[25] Thus Ibn Saud managed to oust the Ottoman army from central Arabia which was an enormous source of prestige for him. His demonstration of power (aided by the Yemeni revolt which diverted Ottoman military energy),[26] forced

24 The treaty between Ibn Saud and the Ottomans is cited in Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p. 61.

25 Hidhlul, pp. 73–83; Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 81; see also J. G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, (2 vols., Calcutta, Government Printing House, 1908–15, pp. 1155–6; hereinafter cited as Lorimer.

26 Revolt in Yemen forced the Ottomans to limit their liabilities in central Arabia. Command of Arabia was taken over by Sidqi Pasha. He appears to have been

the Ottoman government to change its central Arabian policy and adopt a more even-handed approach. In 1906, however, the Al Rashid were still trying to exploit Ottoman support by attracting Ottoman garrisons to Hail. This stirred Ibn Saud to decisive action to eject the Ottoman troops entirely from central Arabia. His ultimatums to Sami Pasha forced the Ottoman government to reduce the al-Qasim garrison and Ibn Saud's forces escorted them firmly out of the territory.

Ibn Saud learned from this experience that although he had beaten back the Ottomans he had still not managed to subdue the indigenous Qusmani players or Ibn Rashid.[27] Thus, his decisive display of authority against a Great Power did not support his original use of coercion to produce finite effects. Ibn Rashid once more instigated raids against Tarafiyya and al-Rass, provoking Ibn Saud to attack him on 14 April 1906 at Rawdat Muhanna near Buraida, where Ibn Rashid was killed.[28] This death ostensibly left Ibn Saud as the paramount authority in Najd, and secured him the northern boundary of al-Qasim. It is often claimed that central Arabian society could achieve political cohesion only under a strong character. Yet while Ibn Rashid's forceful personality left a considerable political vacuum, Ibn Saud was not able to benefit from this to crush the Al Rashid dynasty. Its capital Hail refused to surrender to his siege and he had to withdraw without tribute.

These setbacks were a result of, and were characterised by, the fifth phase in the development of Ibn Saud's coercion, which intensified in 1909. This was a period of disquieting spates of retaliation from his peers who perceived his growing strength as a threat to their own autonomy.

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instructed to negotiate a settlement between Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid and to extricate the Ottoman forces from their predicament in the desert (Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 66).

27 For instance Ibn Saud's rule was challenged by his cousins the Ara'if, grandsons of Saud ibn Faisal, a dynastic threat because they derived from a senior line of the Al Saud (although under the Al Saud system of rule seniority was not significant). See A. al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd wa mulhaqatihi* (Beirut, Dar al-Rihani, 1928), pp. 194–6; hereinafter cited as al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*.

28 Al-Rihani claims that Ibn Saud possessed 1,600 fighting men (al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, p. 157). But possibly this was a surprise attack by a small force: "It is hardly believed here that 250 were killed with Bin Rashid, as the fighting did not last more than a few minutes." (Acting Consul Hussein to Sir N. O'Connor, 13 May 1906, L/P&S/20/FO31.)

The new Rashidi amir, Zamil ibn Subhan,[29] began a military challenge, but Ibn Saud defeated him skilfully at al-Ash'ali. After this victory the Saudi–Kuwaiti alliance suffered a military setback at al-Hadiya[30] when Ibn Saud's cousins the Ara'if challenged his rule, seeking refuge among the hostile Ajman in al-Hasa. Mubarak of Kuwait then became treacherous, begging Ibn Saud's help against the Dhafir tribe, while warning the Dhafir in advance of Ibn Saud's attack. Mubarak was "still trying to secure a balance of power in the desert",[31] and "had second thoughts about offering Abd al Aziz another prestigious victory".[32]

These challenges illustrated to Ibn Saud that he would never secure authority in central Arabia using coercion alone, even if he had overcome a rival who was supported by a Great Power. Coercion could win only temporary de facto power and social acceptance, because coercion was not a finite act, but a perpetual *process* in the society. For instance, it took Ibn Saud several years to suppress a rebellion in Buraida,[33] treacherously encouraged by his own commander Faisal al-Dawish, and which was ended by a confrontation in 1907 at al-Majma'a. Ibn Saud was then reconciled with al-Dawish, but mercy did not encourage loyalty, and perhaps was not intended to. Perhaps Ibn Saud was shoring up the natural coercive system for short-term reasons of expediency. Soon afterwards Ibn Rashid's renewed attacks in al-Qasim revealed another betrayal by al-Dawish.

In 1908 at the battle of Tarafiyya, Ibn Rashid and Abal Khayl again tried to take al-Qasim and were severely defeated by Ibn Saud. Ibn Rashid returned to Hail, while Ibn Saud dispatched a contingent to Buraida

29 Mitib ibn Rashid was murdered in 1906 and was succeeded by his nephew, Sultan ibn Hamud ibn Rashid. He was also murdered as was his brother, Saud al-'Ubayd, who was followed by Saud Mitib's brother, the son of Abd al-Aziz ibn Rashid, who was returned to power by his uncles from al-Subhan. Saud was only eight years old and the real power of the amirate was in the control of al-Subhan. The last figure of any importance was Zamil ibn Subhan. During this short period of under fifteen years, ten amirs or vice-amirs ruled. See Fu'ad Hamza, *Qalb jazirat al-'Arab* (Mecca, 1933), quoted in Sulayman al-Dakhil, "Imarat al-Sa'ud", *Lughat al-'Arab*, (January 1914), pp. 164–5; hereinafter cited as Hamza, in al-Dakhil.

30 Sayf Marzuq al-Shamlan, *Min ta'rikh al-Kuwait* (Cairo, no publisher given, 1959), pp. 150–1.

31 Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 258.

32 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 120.

33 al-Bassam, p. 384.

where the discouraged citizens enabled Ibn Saud to take their town by force so that in the spring Abal Khayl sued for peace. This take-over demonstrated that al-Qasim would always require careful supervision, and that governors selected from established families might ultimately emerge as opponents of the regime. Thus Ibn Saud appointed the wrathful Ibn Jiluwi as a "warrior-governor", since constant pre-emptive control only could halt the coercion cycle. He kept Ibn Jiluwi in charge for five years.

The first confrontation between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein

At this time of repeated hostile attacks from his peers, Ibn Saud had his first confrontation with Sharif Hussein, a test of their respective strengths, which revived the traditional Saudi–Hashemite enmity of the nineteenth century. In this incident Hussein intended to challenge Ibn Saud's autonomy as a leader by invading in 1910 Ibn Saud's tribal domain, the Utaiba area, with his own loyal Utaiba sections. His justification, which was unfounded, was that certain central Najdi tribes, including Ibn Saud's, had refused to pay tribute, which denied his rights as a revered Islamic leader, as "*an* authority". While the *zakat* was the accepted tribute to traditional authority, the collection of taxes was not merely a traditional customary right, it was also a form of *de jure* ritual, a code of ethical behaviour even if not an explicit written constitution. Thus, Hussein was also attempting to affirm *de jure* authority, that Ibn Saud's domain lay *within* the sovereign sharifate territory; he claimed, in fact, executive power within the Najdi boundaries.[34]

Hussein gathered 4,000 bedouin and set out to convince Ibn Saud to pay thirty years' arrears in annual tribute, worth £900. The unexpected outcome was a fortuitous ambush where Ibn Saud's brother was captured.

34 As the British Consul said: "The Grand Shariff according to a Mecca informant has lately demanded of Ibn Saud a yearly due of £900 sterling for the district of Kassim which has not been paid for over 30 years, and all arrears for that time, to which demand no reply has been given; and the Grand Shariff is also said to have ordered the inhabitants of Kassim to throw off their allegiance to ibn Saud and become his . . . that is the Ottoman's subjects, and it is thought probable that he, the Grand Shariff, will send a raid into Kassim." (FO 195/2350.)

Here, Ibn Saud's effective coercive tactics became paralysed by a hostage-taking, which ransomed his reputation for dominance over Najd. Ibn Saud increased his forces, and Hussein also heightened the tension by involving Zamil al-Rashid, deputy amir of Hail.[35] Given Ibn Saud's prestige as a charismatic leader,[36] any rival who harried him would gain stature; however, the crisis for Hussein was that his modest raid might escalate into a major incident which it was beyond his means to handle successfully.

Significantly, in this crisis, Khalid ibn Lu'ay acted as intermediary between the rulers. Ibn Luway ruled over Khurma on the Najd–Hijaz border, which after the Arab revolt became a focus for conflict between Hussein and the Wahhabi movement. Ibn Luway already possessed Wahhabi[37] tendencies and enjoyed good relations with Ibn Saud. Now he defused the situation by telling Ibn Saud that Hussein's entry into Najd was not to be seen as an act of asserting dominance. Ibn Luway

> informed Abd al-Aziz that the situation was far more complicated than it would appear on the surface. The Turks were pressuring Husayn, and Husayn wanted to enhance his reputation with the Ottoman authorities. In reality, continued Khalid b. Luwayy, Husayn had no real designs on Najd and if Abd al-Aziz would simply write a note accepting the conditions of peace, Husayn would leave and never interfere again in the affairs of Najd.[38]

35 Hussein wrote to Zamil, deputy amir of Hail seeking aid against Ibn Saud. Zamil responded by informing Ibn Jiluwi, amir of Buraida, that a treaty existed between Hussein and the amirate of Hail and that he considered his previous agreement with Ibn Saud as mere ink on paper (Despatch of 5 August 1910, FO 195/2350).

36 Charismatic authority occurs when heroism or character inspire popular devotion to exceptional qualities (Weber, p. 32). Weber commented that the Arabian sheikh's right to obedience derives from "exemplary character", an ability to influence people by example (p. 346). Ibn Saud's personal qualities contributed to the popular acceptance of his authority, and his unique character is widely acknowledged by historians and commentators on Arabian politics: "Abdul Aziz is a fair, handsome man, considerably above the average Arab height . . . His reputation amongst Arabs is that of a noble, generous and just man who does not descend to mean actions." (Shakespear to resident, 9 March 1910, R/15/5/26.)

37 For a full exploration of Wahhabism and its origins, see Haifa Alangari, "Ibn Saud's three-headed state: Ibn Saud, the Ikhwan, the ulama, currents of challenge and stability" (M.A. Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 30 September 1990); hereinafter cited as Alangari, M.A. Dissertation.

38 Hidhlul, pp. 93–4.

Ibn Lu'ay's intervention concerned a ritual which was alien to conventional Arabian diplomacy, an international mode of "face-saving". Hussein could not back down before the CUP, but if Ibn Saud nominally acknowledged Hussein's claims, the sharif could retreat. Yet the ransom for the return of Ibn Saud's brother was accepting nominal Hashemite suzerainty and paying a tribute for al-Qasim.

What followed is disputed: Hussein claimed that a treaty[39] was agreed, but Ibn Saud later denied this. Hussein insisted that Ibn Saud had agreed to pay $3,000 annually "as a tax on Qassim". He also "promised to collect tax from the Oteiba tribe and pay to the Grand Sharif annually".[40] Mubarak of Kuwait affirmed that Ibn Saud had agreed terms,[41] and peace was then formally concluded. "The Amir of Mecca had gained a tactical victory for the Ottoman cause; but his adversary had obviously no intention of implementing the terms of the agreement."[42] Ibn Saud clearly believed that his authority should not be damaged by the strategy of hostage-taking. He wrote to Hussein that an agreement made by compulsion was void, and his ally the political agent at Kuwait, asserted:

> I am assured by Abd-ul-Aziz that no documents passed between him and the Sharif regarding the revenues and the government of Kassim . . . All the reports published in the Egyptian and Turkish papers are purely fiction invented by the Sherif to save his own face after he had safely returned to Mecca."[43]

Probably some correspondence was exchanged, but did not constitute a formal treaty. Ibn Saud's father referred to it as a "so-called treaty".[44]

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39 For an account of the treaty with the Ottomans, May 1914, see Khair al-Din al-Zirikli, *al-Wajiz fi sirat al-malik Abdul-Aziz* (Beirut, Dar al-Ilm lil Malayin, 1984), p. 5; hereinafter cited as al-Zirikli. See also Gibran Shami'a, *Al Saud: madihum wa mustaqbalihum* (London, Riad El-Rayyes Books, 1986), p. 109; hereinafter cited as Shami'a.

40 See Despatch No. 54, pp. 383–4, Assistant British Consul Abdurrahman to Sir G. Lowther, FO 195/2350.

41 Shakespear to Percy Cox, 15 May 1913, No. 1906, FO 424/245.

42 Hidhlul, pp. 93–4.

43 Shakespear to Percy Cox, 15 May 1913, FO 424/224.

44 No trace of any such exchange could be found in either the FO or India Office archives, although reference was made to it by the Arab Bureau which asked Hussein to produce a copy.

Sheikh Mubarak's criticism of the event is significant: he did not condemn the breaking of the agreement itself, but the fact that Ibn Saud failed to resolve the dispute using his superior military force. Ibn Saud had thus turned the confrontation into a further dispute over diplomatic ethics, and his refusal to uphold his supposed agreement provided the Hashemites with propaganda capital. As will be seen, Ibn Saud never exhibited such a supposed lack of diplomacy again.[45]

Ibn Saud's initial use of coercion implied that coercive force alone could be a means of controlling the society, despite the tribes' endless appetite for raiding. However, dissent in al-Qasim taught him that tribal coercion was a continuous *process,* which a leader could hope only to channel for his needs. He further understood that, by altering the social structure, he could control the *rate* of coercion and modify it as a system. Thus, his response was to encourage the embryonic Ikhwan movement which helped him to capture al-Hasa, and his new use of coercion, which is described below, proved the culmination of his achievements in this period.

A crucial feature of Ibn Saud's relations with his society was the fragmentation of his associated groups. The recurrent breakdown of cohesion raises questions about Najdi social processes: to what extent was fragmentation dictated by tribal values, and how could a leader, understanding and using these processes, extend his power.

In Ibn Saud's society of *hadar*, bedouin and camel-herder tribes, there was an inherent conflict, providing a factor of instability, between townsman and *bedu.*[46] It was easier for Ibn Saud to control the ulema (the religious élite), since religious doctrine dictated that his government

45 See Kuwait draft despatch, No. C70 of 6 November 1910, L/P&S/10/936.

46 Vassiliev gives an informative description of the authority structure of the nineteenth-century Najdi bedouin tribes as recorded by Jaussen, Doughty, Volney and Burckhardt. No class distinction existed outside the tribes between upper- and lower-ranking bedouin in nomadic tribes, but a class system existed among the high-ranking families. *Al-woujaha'* – the élites – took the major part of the income from raids or taxes from the *hadar* and other minor tribes, craftsmen and *hujaj* (pilgrims) (Vassiliev, pp. 54–5). The tribal sheikh was head of the *ashira* (clan) as both clan chief and economic chief, judging disputes, marital or civil problems and determining living conditions. He kept the tribes to their customs and represented them in foreign relations. See A. Jaussen, *Coutumes des Arabes au Pays de Moab* (Paris, Victor Lecoffre, 1908), pp. 140–5. The sheikh made decisions after consulting the tribal council, maintaining this democratic feature. See J. Burckhardt, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahabys Collected during his Travels in*

should support them financially: thus the Al Sheikh family traditionally associated its welfare with the good fortunes of the Al Saud.[47] Bedouin groups presented a challenge for a leader who wanted to create a cohesive state. The nomadic tribes, mobile and motivated by the prospect of booty, served mainly as armies. Massed Western armies, conscription and concepts of nationalism did not function as mobilising systems. The townsmen were the backbone of Ibn Saud's army,[48] a reliable force he needed to use to the full without alienating the fluid, ferocious bedouin. The Al Saud, who settled in Diriyya in the fifteenth century,[49] lacked a traditional element of militant tribal loyalty. In contrast the Al Rashid rested their authority on a strong indigenous tribal arm, the Shammar.[50] Thus, the Al Saud lacked an extended military wing, an immediately accessible command system to back the amir.

This demonstrates the importance of tribal loyalty to Ibn Saud's bid for paramount leadership. For instance, the opposition of the Shammar tribe to Ibn Saud's expansion meant that he had no chance of enlisting the Al Rashid military wing because the independent Shammar would give allegiance only to Ibn Rashid. When in 1906 Ibn Saud killed the

the East (London, Colburn and Bentley, 1831), vol. 1, p. 117; hereinafter cited as Burckhardt. The council was "*shura* for the Sheikhs and a social court that members of the tribe could go to at any time to discuss matters and consult the tribal Sheikh with other Sheikhs and elites. Then the final verdict or decision would be issued." (C. M. Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (New York, Random House, 1936), pp. 248–9.) The democratic element of military tribal organisation was exemplified in the division of authority in the *fakhd* and tribe whereby the Sheikh had civil authority and a commander had military authority (Burckhardt, p. 296). The increasing concentration of important positions among élites indicates that tribal authority started to lose its clan character and became "tyrannical because the authority of chief of the chiefs" was "unlimited and virtually absolute". (C. F. C. Volney, *Voyage en Syrie et en Egypte pendant les années 1783, 1784, et 1785* (La Haye, 1959), pp. 207–20; hereinafter cited as Volney, *Voyage*.) However, the tribal Sheikh did not have automatic power of command over members of the tribe, but might obtain general consent depending on his personal character. He could not give orders but could give advice (Burckhardt, pp. 116–17).

47 See: De Gaury, *Rulers*, Chapter 12; Vassiliev, Chapter 5; Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 9.

48 A. J. Toynbee, "The Rise of the Wahhabi Power" and "The Delimitation of Frontiers", *Survey of International Affairs* (1927), p. 28; hereinafter cited as Toynbee, *Survey*.

49 O. A. ibn Bishr, *Unwan al-majd fi tarikh Najd* (2 vols., Riyadh, Maktabat al-Riyadh al-Hadith, undated), p. 16; hereinafter cited as Ibn Bishr.

50 For a full account of the Al Rashid dynasty, see al-Rasheed. See also A. Ibn Uthaimeen, *Nashāt Imarat Al Rashid* (Riyadh, Al Ibaikan, 1411 AH).

dominant Ibn Rashid at Rawdat Muhanna, the Shammar still remained loyal to the Al Rashid, even during Ibn Saud's siege of Hail. Between 1902 and 1920 the Al Rashid dynasty declined to a level of exceptional decadence while Ibn Saud implemented ceaseless social strategies to centralise his social structure through intermarriage, delegated power and exploitation of common interests. Yet throughout this period the Shammar loyally resisted his coercion, enticements and charismatic appeal.

Ibn Saud successfully imposed his rule upon other tribes, however, amd attacked the Qahtan and Utaiba.[51] Here, the sociopolitical norms of Arabia became crucial to the exercise of power.[52] The customary ritual of imposing submission took the place of encouraging ideological affiliation. Such "raiding for loyalty" eroded the rival leader's power base.[53] For instance, when in 1908 Ibn Subhan's section of the Al Rashid usurped control of Hail, they immediately raided Ibn Saud's Mutair, and Ibn Saud retaliated by attacking Al Rashid loyalists of the Shammar and Harb.[54] Such raids were preliminary rituals of expanding power, as when Ibn Saud, having established himself in al-Qasim, raided the Harb in Hashemite territory near Medina. Mubarak of Kuwait claimed it was Ibn Saud's raiding of the Muntafiq and other tribes loyal to Kuwait which caused him at one point to conspire against Ibn Saud.[55]

Tribal loyalty was politically significant in demarcating the ruler's territory. It was relatively easy to re-establish Al Saud control over southern Najd because the associated society had not traditionally followed Al Rashid.[56] Sheikh Mubarak commented:

> The tribes of the South are gathering round him (Abdul Aziz bin Saud), viz. Dawasir . . . El-Murra, El-Ujman and the inhabitants of

51 The Qahtan tribe was despoiled to show Ibn Saud's determination to rule in fact as well as in name (Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 240). His brother Muhammad attacked the Utaiba (Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 32).

52 Michael Rush, *Politics and Society* (Herfordshire, Harvester/Wheatsheaf Press, 1992); hereinafter cited as Rush.

53 In autumn 1902 Ibn Rashid interfered with the loyalty of the al Hasa tribes of Ajman and Murrah. Ibn Saud countered this by enlisting the loyalty of the al Dawasir, al Murrah and al Shamir (Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 32).

54 Hidhlul, pp. 92–3.

55 Lorimer, p. 1152.

56 In 1903 when Ibn Rashid attempted to overwhelm Riyadh in Ibn Saud's absence, the inhabitants demonstrated their loyalty by refusing to admit Ibn Rashid to the city (Hidhlul, p. 65).

> Nejd, and they have started re-building the wall round Riadh which Ibn Rashid had demolished.[57]

In 1903 Ibn Rashid tried to stop this allegiance spreading northward by subduing the Utaiba near Artawwiya, the Subai and Suhul in the Dahna. It was crucial for the outcome of a battle that it occurred in an area of loyalty to one power contestant. For instance, in 1902 Ibn Saud lured Ibn Rashid's forces into Dilam where the Al Saud had popular support from the Bani Tamim and the Hawta and al-Hariq who inflicted heavy losses. In 1903, popular support in Shaqra and Sudair enabled Ibn Saud to push north through Ibn Rashid's fortifications at al-Washim.

The most striking illustration that social support was essential to the extension of a central Arabian hegemony is given by the problems which both Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud experienced in their rival bids to control al-Qasim. Ibn Rashid could not rely on the independent Qusmanis for cooperation. He thus appealed to the Ottomans for assistance, involving them in a local rivalry. Inconsistent social support thus pressured central Arabian leaders to exploit or form foreign alliances.[58] Ibn Rashid's deficiencies here had repercussions for Ibn Saud, for Ottoman intervention prevented the Saudi advance.[59] If Ibn Saud invaded al-Qasim without local support an Ottoman blockade might cut off his supplies;[60] such uncertainty thus forced him to postpone invasion.

Ibn Saud's "dependence on the far from certain loyalty of the tribes and towns from his own realm was always a source of grave weakness".[61] One unreliable ally was the Mutair, led by the treacherous Faisal al-Dawish, the archetypal fluctuating Najdi, whom Wahhabism later transformed into a loyal Ikhwan commander. It was vital for Ibn Saud to remove such uncertain loyalty if he was to create a politically cohesive territory. Since the conversion of tribes was a general preoccupation of Arabian rulers it was natural that Ibn Saud should later solve the problem of social cohesion through a process of religious conversion.

57 L/P&S/7/142.
58 Shakespear to Percy Cox, 9 March 1910, FO 424/227.
59 Lorimer, p. 1146.
60 See Kuwait draft despatch, No. C70 of 6 November 1910, L/P&S/10/936.
61 Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 260.

Creating cohesive support involved redefining tribal ethos and interests. Intermarriage was one means which Ibn Saud exploited fully to strengthen his tribal links.[62] Tribal cohesion also depended on the character of the leader, as Philby noted:[63] for instance, when the astute Muhammad ibn Rashid died in 1896 the Al Rashid political base split and enabled Ibn Saud to seize power. Later, the death of Muhammad ibn Rashid in 1906 caused the political disintegration of Hail. The tribal need for a charismatic leader was easily satisfied by Ibn Saud's desert warrior nature which eclipsed his sedentary tribal origin.[64] "Ibn Saud's capture of Riyadh has become a legend of Arabian folklore. By this exploit he proved that he had the requisite qualities for a Sheikh: courage, leadership and *hadh* or luck."[65]

Ibn Saud conducted the tribal rituals of raid and counter-raid, assisted by tribes motivated by the sense of glory which the bedouin derived from raiding. Perhaps he satisfied the bedouin revenge ethic which indicated that if a tribal member was killed then revenge must be taken.[66] However, some accounts have exaggerated Ibn Saud's acts of retribution. It was claimed that in 1906 Ibn Saud dispatched Ibn Rashid's head to Riyadh,[67] and sent messengers to various leaders and the Ottomans, declaring himself "ruler of the whole 'Shark'".[68]

Other aspects of Ibn Saud's style of government diverged from bedouin practice: he was not treacherous in political friendship and rarely removed enemies by assassination, a traditional means of obtaining power.[69] Ibn Saud followed a policy of calculated mercy. For instance, he

62 Ibn Saud's wives were from the families of al-Sheikh (the mother of King Faisal); al-Sudairi; the Shammar tribe (the mother of Abdallah); al-Anaffa (the mother of his son, Saud); and al-Rashid (the mother of his son, Musaad).

63 "[Ibn Saud] himself had seen and played a prominent part in the collapse of the secular State of Muhammad ibn Rashid as soon as the strong hand of a great personality had been removed from the helm by death." (Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, pp. 260–1.)

64 Although Ibn Saud descended from the Unaiza tribe, the Al Saud had settled in al-Dariyya and become more a sedentary than a bedouin section tribe.

65 Troeller, p. 21.

66 Volney, *Voyage*, p. 211.

67 *Ibid.*, Dr Al Uthaimeen strongly opposes such a claim and doubts its authenticity.

68 See Despatch No. 400, Sir N. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey, 11 June 1906, L/P&S/20.

69 For instance in the fifteen years after 1906, in Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and Hail ten amirs ruled (Hamza, in al-Dakhil, pp. 164–5).

never made such devastating raids as did Ibn Rashid on settlements which had proved disloyal. In the pursuit of stable rule, he did not attack the interests of his society. Only once, when the people of Buraida had risen repeatedly against him, did he cut down the fruits of their palms after the battle of Tarafiyya.[70]

His calculated mercy was termed a fault by Mubarak who described him as "too quick to anger and too easily appeased".[71] Certainly Ibn Saud displayed exceptional tolerance to his cousins, the Ara'if, who asserted their dynastic right to rule: "It is somewhat remarkable that 'Abd al-'Aziz should have received them so freely into his ranks especially in view of their association with the Rashid family up to the fall of Unayza."[72] He behaved similarly with some of his leaders who temporarily changed loyalty. When he finally invaded Buraida in 1908, he at once proclaimed immunity, and to good effect: the rebel governor sued for peace and was graciously allowed to seek asylum in Iraq.[73] There was a reason for this: Ibn Saud intended him to be the last native governor of Buraida, and his flight smoothed the appointment of a loyal candidate.

Ibn Saud's merciful stance was a clear attempt to encourage loyalty by affording a chance to escape retribution. After al-Dawish and his Mutair rebelled and were defeated at al Majma'a in 1907, Ibn Saud did not have him executed although the latter had often revolted before.[74] A year later al-Dawish's recurrent infidelity involved Ibn Saud in the immense bloodshed of the battle of Tarafiyya;[75] yet afterwards, Ibn Saud installed him as a commander again. The reason is clear: the deficiency of the Al Saud's support from the military strands of its society meant that Ibn Saud could not afford to alienate the powerful Mutair: "'Abd al-'Aziz was more in need of friends than dead enemies."[76]

If the disparate natures of Ibn Saud's commanders represented different aspects of his regime, al-Dawish certainly symbolised its fragile

70 al-Bassam, p. 385.
71 Lorimer, p. 1152.
72 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 113.
73 *Ibid.*, p. 100.
74 Al-Dawish had, for instance, taken bribes from the Ottoman commander Sidqi Pasha (Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 93; Hidhlul, p. 85).
75 In the battle of Tarafiyya (1908), another bid for al-Qasim, Ibn Saud again resoundingly defeated Faisal (Hidhlul, p. 86).
76 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 93.

loyalties,[77] while Ibn Jiluwi stood for its tireless military control. Ibn Saud also exerted social control through his power of appointment, where delegation shrewdly created cohesion. During his wars his father functioned as his administrative rearguard in Riyadh and, for instance, negotiated with the Ottomans after the battle of Bukhairiyya in 1905.[78] Several excellent deputies allowed the streamlining of his administration, including the strong commanders, al-Sudairi and al-Swailem, who did not challenge him. Ibn Jiluwi's support proved decisive, for instance at Bukhairiyya, which was won against all odds and the Ottoman forces. Ibn Jiluwi wielded his share of power emphatically and was a feared governor of the difficult territories of al-Qasim and then al-Hasa. For several years after Bukhairiyya, the self-interested Qusmanis remained in the Al Saud camp despite the military superiority of the Ottomans and the Al Rashid. Such loyalty was maintained by Ibn Jiluwi who commanded the Qusmani and Mutair contingents.[79]

However, when Ibn Saud first conquered a town (such as Unaiza) he usually first tried to secure the town's voluntary loyalty by appointing local ruling families as governors. For instance, he appointed Abal Khayl as amir of Buraida.[80] In al-Qasim this tactic often failed, for such families rebelled or fought internally for control. After repeated trouble, Ibn Saud would appoint an outside governor from the tribes who were related to him, perhaps by marriage. For instance, in 1908 he installed Ahmad al-Sudairi as amir and successor to Abal Khayl[81] and stationed a permanent detachment under his brother. Thereafter, the province attained more cohesion and ceased to be a source of political concern.

Ibn Saud's success in conquering central Arabia was enhanced by his ability to convert social fragmentation into social cohesion, by skilfully composing tribal military confederations. His success contrasted with the Al Rashid's attempts, which immediately preceded his own, to obtain a

77 For instance, al-Dawish took Ibn Rashid's side in the 1903 struggle with Ibn Saud in Kuwait (al-Bassam, p. 363).
78 Shami'a, p. 103.
79 al-Bassam, p. 384.
80 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 100.
81 Hidhlul, pp. 88–9.

confederated support in Najd.[82] Ibn Saud achieved political cohesion via common social interests, or *maslaha*. Even before the Wahhabi revival, he tried to ensure that he served the interests of his society. He realised that the satisfaction of popular interests could be channelled to serve his own. It was through a supposed consultation with the Najdi people that the Al Saud evaded the Ottomans' forceful proposal to appropriate al-Qasim and maintain it as a buffer zone between the rivals, the Al Saud and the Al Rashid.[83] Ibn Saud's father shrewdly presented this proposal to the Najdi people, knowing they would never allow an Ottoman occupation: thus the society rejected this foreign intervention.

The major tribal leaders in Najd often used local tribal feuds as a means of weakening their main rivals' coercive strength. Local tribal skirmishes thus became incorporated into the coercive competition between overlords. A leader might call a confederation of tribes to assist a relatively weak tribe which was under threat of attack, although by protecting the weaker tribe he stood to gain little in material terms.[84] Rather, his gain might lie in boosting his image as a disinterested paternal authority. Therefore, in raiding the Ajman in al-Hasa (in 1910), Ibn Saud was striking at Ibn Rashid through Ibn Rashid's loyalists. When in 1907 the faithless al-Dawish allied himself with the rebellious amir of Buraida,[85] Ibn Saud drew his opposing army from the Utaiba, because the Utaiba were a "natural" enemy of both Shammar and Mutair.[86] Thus his alliance with the Utaiba put into checkmate Ibn Rashid, who was allied with the Mutair, at the battle of al-Majma'a.[87] In addition to

82 It has been argued that the reason why the amirate of Jabal Shammar could not project its rule as one unified Najdi state was that it had the full support of one military tribe. Thus, the society could not regard the amirate as comprising a confederation of tribes, but merely as an authority backed by one tribe over others (Vassiliev, p. 245).

83 al-Bassam, pp. 374–5.

84 For instance in 1903, learning that Ibn Rashid was advancing toward the Utaiba and Qahtan *diras*, Ibn Saud encouraged the people of al-Washim and Sudair to help al-Sudairi in Shaqra (Hidhlul, p. 66).

85 Volney, *Voyage*, p. 211.

86 This alignment contrasts with that only several years earlier, at the battles of Bukhairiyya and Shinana, where Ibn Rashid was supported by the Utaiba, the Hutaym and Harb, as well as his own Shammar. At that time, the Mutair fought on the Saudi side with men from Riyadh, al-Qasim and al-Kharj.

87 al-Bassam, p. 384.

exploiting such established tribal antagonisms, a ruler could create tribal disputes to further his power.

The "social consensus on hostility"

With his ability for composing military coalitions based on *maslaha*, Ibn Saud created an organising system of authority for his society. One of the main reasons for the society's interest in military coalitions was that Najdi tribes were suspicious of the Al Rashid's military dependence on the Shammar alone. The Najdis, like other inhabitants of the poor Arabian Peninsula, naturally cared less about who ruled than about protecting their own interests, which were violated by al-Rashid's personal militia, the Shammar. Thus Ibn Saud's need to compose military confederations suited tribal interests and had a unique, stabilising effect on those under his control. Coercive action became a collaborative venture and confederations gave Ibn Saud executive coercive capacity. By satisfying tribal interests, he specifically attracted cohesion through the medium of social support.

For example, in 1902 he balanced al-Murrah tribal loyalty against the vacillating Ajman.[88] Also, in 1903 when Ibn Rashid raided the Araida, Ibn Saud composed forces of the Ajman, al-Murrah, Subai, Suhul, Bani Hajir, Bani Khalid and Awazim.[89] Ibn Saud's initial push north from Riyadh served to mobilise influential families opposed to the current regime, in towns such as Zilfi, Unaiza and Buraida.[90] When the Buraida ruler joined with the Ottomans to diminish Ibn Saud's control, Ibn Saud built his support base from Buraida elements opposed to Ottoman occupation.[91] Ibn Saud thus strengthened his hand in al-Qasim by sharing a commonality of interest with the Qusmanis. In the important battle of Tarafiyya (1908), Ibn Saud combined the Utaiba, Qahtan, Subai and Suhul with forces from Riyadh, al-Kharj, al-Washim and al-Qasim, to combat the powerful Mutair led by al-Dawish.[92] Again, he countered recurrent social instability with a rapidly composed coalition.

88 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 32.

89 Hidhlul, pp. 64–5.

90 Two hundred exiles from al-Qasim region mustered for him, and when he took Unaiza in 1904 he placed the exiles from the area in charge. To besiege al-Zilfi in 1903 for example, he drew on al-Zilfi exiles in Kuwait (al-Bassam, pp. 367–8).

91 Lorimer, p. 1152.

92 Hidhlul, p. 86.

At this point in his quest for authority, after 1908, he entered a new power phase and a new understanding of the nature of successful long-term rule in Najd. Although it might be assumed that he had established his rule with the death in battle in 1906 of the formidable Ibn Rashid, and by forcing the Ottoman evacuation, he still faced the difficulty that social loyalty to him was still in many ways tenuous. He had merely made himself as successful as a Najdi ruler could be, given the inherent social instability.

The recurrent breakdown of social cohesion was exemplified by the vacillating bedouin. This was seen particularly at the difficult battle of Bukhairiyya when most bedouin contingents deserted. Yet it is more precise to describe this cultural vacillation as a set of fundamental, valid internal conflicts *within* the ethos of the society. Such conflicts differed from problems such as the immovable loyal *asabiyya* (blood relation) of the Shammar, because social groups experienced an internal conflict between tribal unity and physical survival. The common view of bedouin vacillation does not sufficiently emphasise the struggle for survival in a harsh environment as a cause for social fragmentation, as in the great drought of Najd (1907–8)[93] which created "general dissension", where tribes abandoned Ibn Saud for Ibn Rashid's fertile territory.[94]

The *maslaha* which created cohesion in a raid could also equally cause fragmentation. Ibn Saud capitalised on the acquisitive bedouin nature at al-Ash'ali in 1908 when he lured the Shammar away from the main battle by enticing them with camels.[95] He channelled tribal interest on a grander scale when, after Bukhairiyya, he discovered that his protégé ruler of Buraida was implicated in intrigues; he withdrew entirely from the territory in disgust. This bold ploy, which risked his hard-won control over al-Qasim, dramatised his disinterest in the fate of the Qusman and reminded them of their dependence on him. Yet Ibn Saud knew that his power over al-Qasim was not in danger: the Ottomans would not take over, and Ibn Rashid soon returned to al-Qasim, occupying al-Rass and al-Shiqqa, aiming to destroy the Buraida chief. The population, knowing that their own chief could not defend them, asked Ibn Saud to

93 al-Bassam, p. 385.
94 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 113.
95 Hidhlul, pp. 90–1.

return. Thus he cleverly manipulated the Qusmani social support without imposing military control.

Manipulation of *maslaha* was not always possible. One obstacle was the endemic bedouin practice of rapid transfer of loyalty to the winner, or away from the loser – "rebound loyalty".[96] "The bedouin is more of a raider rather than a fighter. He offends only for acquisitive ends and he won't risk his life if his material reward is not worth it."[97] During the battle of Bukhairiyya, both boredom *and* fear of the current cholera epidemic made the bedouin retreat and dissipate Ibn Rashid's military strength. Similarly, the Al Rashid exploited the hardship of drought to induce an eastern Ajman section to raid Saudi territory.[98] The discontented Al Saud section, "the Ara'if", joined with these hostile Ajman,[99] which shows how swiftly hostile new coalitions could form to challenge Ibn Saud.

The inevitability of bedouin "rebound loyalty"[100] and Ibn Saud's mercy to incorrigibles such as al-Dawish, raise the question of whether this culture really considered it treason to change sides. This pattern was a fact of political life, to be acknowledged and worked with. Its rapid storming effect could work to the leader's positive advantage, and explains the fluidity with which Ibn Saud could compose his coalitions. For instance Ibn Saud's capture of Unaiza in 1904 immediately attracted loyalty to his side, particularly in Buraida: "evidently, the conquest of 'Unaiza had convinced the city that matters were developing in favour of 'Abd al 'Aziz".[101]

96 The bedouin were known for fickleness and unreliability, characteristic of their inherent individualism: "Today a sword in the hand of the prince, a dagger in his back tomorrow." See al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, p. 260. In the midst of battle they would quit if they had acquired sufficient booty, if the battle was going against them, or if the enemy was putting up a hard fight. See Hafez Wahbah, *Jazirat al-'Arab fi al-qarn al-'ishrin* (Cairo, Matba'at al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1956), p. 295; hereinafter cited as Wahbah, *Jazirat*.

97 Volney, *Voyage*, p. 211.

98 For instance, al-Dawish had taken bribes from Sidqi Pasha, the Ottoman commander (Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 93).

99 Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 256.

100 For instance at the battle of Tarafiyya in 1908, the bedouin with Ibn Saud immediately fled at the start of battle but returned when they realised he was winning (Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 96).

101 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 49.

"Rapid loyalty transfer" mirrors the factious tribal habit of seizing booty in raids and counter-raids, and of conflicting dynastic claims to suzerainty. Loyalty transfers were often too hasty and unwise, undoing the tribes as well as the leader. For instance Ibn Saud, after gaining power in al-Qasim, attempted unsuccessful raids against Ibn Rashid.[102] This failure enabled al-Dawish to stir up latent rebelliousness in Buraida to make a bid for power.[103] It was a foolish rebellion, given Ibn Saud's control of al-Qasim, but the lesson for Ibn Saud was that, after many impressive successes, the loyalty-transfer ethic could still provoke immediate challenges to his power.

It is a universal political maxim that the absence of a common antagonist focuses aggression inward and splits the society. This dynamic was intensified in central Arabia, a society modelled on channelled anarchy, rather than on consensus or conflict. Paradoxically, social stability and continuity were bound to provoke instability, because the bedouin profited materially from instability,

> It was almost as if the Arab of central Arabia could not suffer the development of a stable and ordered society. One has the distinct impression that 'Abd al-'Aziz had received the support of dissident elements bored with the uniformity of the Rashidi rule and now that 'Abd al-'Aziz appeared ready to forge an ordered and stable realm, these same Bedouin remembered their quarrel with the townsmen and tribe turned once again to fighting tribe.[104]

In the context of this social system, Ibn Saud's rule reached a crisis where the power he had accumulated needed to be continually repaired. One advantage was that the Al Rashid's power was finally declining due to corruption and internal rivalry,[105] and their support in the north was challenged by the Ruwalla. In fact Ibn Saud and the Al Rashid were both plagued by continuous fragmentation. "The desert tribes and the city States were alike obsessed by a sense of local or parochial loyalty which overrode the greater patriotism and public spirit necessary to the maintenance of an ordered realm."[106] The challenge for Ibn Saud after a

102 Shami'a, p. 103.
103 Lorimer, pp. 1147–8.
104 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 100.
105 *Ibid.*, p. 101 and Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 254.
106 *Ibid.*, p. 261.

decade of fighting was to keep hold of the ground gained and prevent it from being jeopardised by bedouin whims. To centralise control, he needed to reach the point where he no longer led his own campaigns, but could delegate operations to loyal agencies. The solutions open to him were, first, to use his religious legitimacy to transform bedouin concepts of political administration towards an Islamic *umma*;[107] and second, to obtain unsurmountable power over society through foreign assistance.

The outstanding feature of British intervention in Najd during this period was that it moved from support of Al Saud as a check against other powers (in order to stabilise regional security)[108] towards cordial neutrality. This shift arose from a broader change in Britain's strategy, from backing the Ottomans as a counter to Russian power, to undermining Ottoman rule in Arabia in order to protect its interests in Egypt and Mesopotamia.[109] In undermining Ottoman dominance, seen as represented by the Al Rashid, Britain bypassed the Al Saud and supported Kuwait as a long-standing British protectorate.[110]

The British interests in the region were administered by the Government of India.[111] British political agents in the Gulf issued reports to the viceroy of India from the Bushire residency and agencies in Bahrain, Kuwait and Muscat, and the Aden Protectorate (established in 1839). The British naval presence in the Gulf and Red Sea had been fairly continuous since 1820 to protect the route to India for strategic and imperial reasons. The protectorate sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf under British suzerainty were guaranteed sovereignty, specifically against Ibn Saud, who later claimed that the Trucial Coast had belonged to his ancestors.

Ibn Saud's early authority depended greatly on assistance from Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait, who passed on practical advantages of British aid, that is munitions. The Al Saud and Al Sabah alliance derived from the fact

107 al-Bassam, pp. 374–5.

108 Hidhlul, p. 74.

109 Vassiliev, p. 245.

110 Britain's secret treaty in 1899 gave Kuwait British protection from external threats in exchange for the surrender of external sovereignty (J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press), p. 475); see also Wahbah, *Jazirat*, pp. 85–6; Lorimer, vol. I, pp. 1049–50; Vassiliev, p. 248.

111 The Government of India was responsible for all Arab chieftaincy relations and Persian Gulf affairs.

that each served the other's interests: the Kuwait protectorate provided a strategic refuge for the Al Saud, while in turn Mubarak gained from harbouring and helping militarily the Al Saud. This was because Al Saud helped protect Mubarak against territorial incursions by the Al Rashid, thus limiting the expansion of the Al Rashid and the Ottomans. Although Britain was concerned that arming Ibn Saud might impinge on British influence in Kuwait, such arms did mean that Ibn Saud could help to police the protectorate,[112] and thus Ibn Rashid complained to the Ottomans that Britain was implicitly supporting Ibn Saud.

This period witnessed Ibn Saud's first concerted attempts to form an alliance with Britain. Even after February 1905 when the Ottoman empire considered him its governor of Najd,[113] Ibn Saud continued repeatedly to approach Britain. He had always desired to be part of the protectorate rather than the Ottoman system because his close rivals had Ottoman alliances, and because he observed the benefit Kuwait derived from Royal Navy protection – protection which might free his policing energies for a new phase of expansion. In 1903 Ibn Saud contacted the political agent in Bahrain: even at this stage he had plans to drive the Ottomans from al-Hasa, which, he thought, "would be a lasting success only if England undertook to protect his littoral from a Turkish invasion. Would the government undertake such an obligation?"[114] Britain declined politely because it did not want to create a power vacuum in this province adjoining the route to India.

In these early approaches to Britain Ibn Saud maintained that a treaty had already been signed in 1863 between the Al Saud and Col. Pelly, representing the British government, recognising the Al Saud as rulers of Qatif. The British official who liaised with Ibn Saud, Captain Shakespear, believed that a declaration in Aitchison's Treaties did substantiate this. However, the British Foreign Office considered the agreement a "voluntary engagement", which had never been signed by the government.[115] Nevertheless, the idea of a prior agreement was firmly established in Ibn Saud's mind.

112 al-Bassam, p. 384.

113 Daniel Silverfarb, "British relations with Ibn Saud of Najd, 1914–1919", Ph.D. thesis (University of Wisconsin, 1972), p. 19; hereinafter cited as Silverfarb.

114 Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 258.

115 FO Confidential Print 9953, Memo by FO as to British interests in the Persian Gulf, 1908.

Ibn Saud's lack of success in securing a British alliance presented an obstacle to his consolidation of power. His central Arabian territory was irrelevant to the great maritime empire whose strategy was "sea-locked" just as Saudi strategy was "land-locked". Like the Ottoman empire, Britain had a greater interest in Hijaz than Najd because of its need to protect British Muslim pilgrims. The British acting resident, after Ibn Saud's lightning capture of Riyadh, at first responded laconically that Ibn Rashid "will have other things to think of than an attack on Kuwait".[116] Despite attacks by the Ottoman protégé on its protectorate, Britain initially supported Ottoman influence in Najd to counteract threats from Persia or Russia. While Britain appreciated Ibn Saud's erosion of the Al Rashid influence,[117] such achievements did not inspire diplomatic pacts.

Following Ibn Saud's defeat of the Al Rashid in September 1904, Mubarak as intermediary asked the British what military action Ibn Saud could undertake. The response was neutral: "Ibn Saud must consult his own interests . . . in the absence of instructions from HM Government neither the Political Agent nor the Sheikh could give him any advice."[118] Ibn Saud needed to appreciate the wider perspective of Britain's complex relations with the Ottoman empire, and to understand that British policy was not decided upon quickly, nor by officials on the spot. When Mubarak's request was dispatched to Britain's secretary of state for India, the predictable response was that Britain would not enter into affairs of the interior. Some of Ibn Saud's bids to attract Britain, such as his reported approach to the Russians, did make Britain deliberate, but Ibn Saud's attempt at leverage here failed: the British ambassador to Constantinople termed it "a manœuvre better designed to alienate rather than encourage support".[119]

Again in 1906 Ibn Saud made a more specific approach to Britain, indirectly through the sheikhs of Kuwait and Qatar. Ibn Saud's motivation in attempting an alliance was to recover two valuable districts, al-Hasa and Qatif. He suggested that a secret understanding should be arranged with the British government whereby he would be granted British protection

116 Acting resident to Government of India, 6 February 1902, L/P&S/7/142.
117 Lorimer, p. 1152.
118 See Par. 134, summary of Bushire to GOI, 20 October 1904, R/15/1/745.
119 R. Kumar, *India and the Persian Gulf, 1858–1907: A Study of British Imperial Policy* (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1965), p. 203.

from Ottoman assaults by sea if he should ever drive out the Ottomans, unaided, from his ancestral dominions: "In return for this protection the Amir is willing to bind himself to certain agreements (probably similar to those of the Trucial chiefs) and to accept Political Officer to reside at his court."[120] However, the Government of India did not want to alienate the Ottomans, so Britain politely declined; the British foreign office view at this time remained the same: the tribes must settle their own affairs.[121] Given Ibn Saud's desire for a treaty, it was easy during Ibn Saud's early rule for Britain to curb his ambitions politely. In 1906 the intervention of Resident Cox on behalf of the sultan of Muscat and the ruler of Abu Dhabi prevented Ibn Saud from entering Oman, eliciting a meekly-phrased acquiescence.[122] Ibn Saud thus respected Britain's protectorates.

Again, through Mubarak, a series of informal meetings was arranged between the resident in Kuwait, Shakespear, and Ibn Saud in 1911. This was Ibn Saud's first encounter with a European. Ibn Saud eloquently asserted that an historic friendship existed between Britain and the Al Saud, and described his aim as being that the Al Saud should regain a strategically and economically useful seaport to secure commercial prosperity for Najd. However, should he attack Ottoman littoral territory, the Ottoman navy would retaliate, and only British naval assistance could counter this. Although his formal response was discouraging, Shakespear enthusiastically put the case for British support to his superiors:

> with the As-Saud established in Hasa and in friendly relations with us our position would be considerably strengthened, there would be an absence of the present attempts at intrigue between Trucial chiefs and the Turks, and there is no doubt that Bin Saud's power in the hinterland would render the main caravan route to the interior

120 Political resident to Government of India, 24 November 1906, R/15/1/745.

121 The British Foreign Office was always consulted when matters involved international relations; for instance, when the Ottoman empire made overtures to Kuwait, or when Persia claimed Bahrain. The consul in Jeddah reported to the ambassador in Constantinople, who reported to the foreign secretary. In this instance, the Foreign Office quite definitely instructed the India Office: "It would be advisable to adhere to the present policy of His Majesty's Government in Central Arabia." (Louis Mallet to India Office, 28 July 1911, FO 371/1249.)

122 Troeller, p. 23.

> so safe that trade, already almost entirely British or Indian, would benefit materially.[123]

That is, Ibn Saud could provide security for British pilgrims, which would smooth British rule in India. Moreover, Ibn Saud argued that a British–Saudi alliance would diminish Ottoman control and help prevent an Ottoman challenge to British naval policing. In such proposals, Ibn Saud explained his rationale for invading al-Hasa. Nevertheless, although Ibn Saud had impressed Shakespear, the latter did not want to raise false hopes and told him flatly that Britain could not aid his central Arabian campaigns.

During these exchanges with Britain, Ibn Saud also astutely exploited any advantages offered by the Ottomans. Although the Ottomans aided his rivals, the Al Rashid, devoid of British support as he was, Ibn Saud "was not disposed to challenge Ottoman power repeatedly".[124] Here, Ibn Saud's motivations resembled the Al Rashid's: neither wanted to promote Ottoman interests in Najd, but each preferred cooperation and assistance rather than complete suppression of the Ottomans.

There were other reasons for maintaining some relations with the Ottoman empire, such as the religious affinity, the moral obligation of Islamic powers to treat together. Turkey exploited its paternalistic image as an "imam empire" dominating regional flocks for their own salvation. Another reason for Ibn Saud's appeasement of the Ottomans was the current Ottoman domestic conflict over Islam, a conflict between traditionalists and constitutionalists in which Ibn Saud's imam status might work against him. If he were to perceive the Young Turks' constitutionalism as blasphemous, for example, and challenge the Ottomans on this count, he would still to some extent be challenging the greatest Islamic power – and even Ottoman secularists might, under pressure, use the Islamic card against him. The risk of this was shown when Colonel Shukri, the regional Ottoman representative, learning that Ibn Saud had taken al-Qasim, requested that Ibn Saud presented his grievances to the Ottomans not to Mubarak because they considered him to be a rebel against the caliph.[125] Shukri created a crisis for Ibn Saud's religious

123 Shakespear to resident, 8 April 1911, R/15/5/27.
124 Silverfarb, p. 13.
125 Goldrup, *Saudi Arabia*, pp. 52–3.

legitimacy; moreover, his troops threatened a devastating attack. Ibn Saud replied that he felt no obligation to the caliph and noted that the Ottomans had proved ineffective in policing religious interests, citing the blatant robbery of pilgrims in Hijaz.[126]

During Ibn Saud's early bid for power, the Ottomans accommodated Ibn Saud's success within a revised power structure, in order to restore regional equilibrium. After Bukhairiyya (in 1904), when Ibn Saud decisively routed the Rashidi–Ottoman forces,[127] his victory "convinced the Ottoman Government that it would have to come to terms with the Najd ruler in order to retain any influence in central Arabia".[128] The new commander was instructed to negotiate a settlement and extricate the Ottoman expeditionary force. During subsequent peace negotiations with the vali of Basra,[129] the Sublime Porte appointed Ibn Saud's father as Qaim Maqam and made al-Qasim a neutral buffer zone between Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud. The Ottomans wanted to enforce this neutrality, through their two military bases at Buraida and at Unaiza respectively. Luckily for Ibn Saud at this point the revolt in Yemen forced the Ottomans to divert their resources southward.[130] The revolt in Yemen and Ibn Saud's practical coercive strength put pressure on the Ottomans to accept him. Thus in 1905 Ibn Saud was appointed governor of Najd, accepted Ottoman suzerainty and agreed that al-Qasim would be garrisoned and administered by the Ottomans. "The significance of the arrangement lies particularly in the fact that it constituted a form of official Ottoman recognition of the re-establishment of the Saud dynasty in Najd."[131]

At first, Ottoman subsidies continued to be biased: in 1906 Ibn Rashid received 200 Ottoman pounds per month, while Ibn Saud received 90 per month.[132] However, between 1907 and 1909, after a series of assassinations within the Al Rashid family, their Ottoman subsidy was sent directly to the sucessor to the leadership of the Al

126 al-Bassam, pp. 377–9.
127 Reportedly 2000 Ottoman regular troops, six guns, and a large bedouin contingent (Silverfarb, p. 12).
128 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
129 al-Bassam, pp. 374–7.
130 Hidhlul, pp. 73–4.
131 Silverfarb, p. 19.
132 Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 261.

Rashid tribe, who was in refuge in Medina. Ottoman support no longer sufficed to bolster the Al Rashid influence in Najd since the Ottomans, perceiving local power changes, began to treat with Ibn Saud. Despite the unpopularity of the Ottomans in Najd, their support of Ibn Saud became a legitimising acknowledgement of his authority. Their economic endorsement brought Ibn Saud advantages,[133] but his actions now needed to accommodate the fact that if he struck against the Ottomans he would endanger his subsidy.[134]

The Ottomans could also offer Ibn Saud access to their rudimentary administrative infrastructure of constitutionally-styled, token enclaves. Najd was now divided according to the Ottoman administrative system.[135] From 1905 Najd became a recognized Ottoman district, with Riyadh as the centre. Prudently, the Al Saud swore loyalty to the Ottoman sovereign in a 1905 meeting with the vali of Basra. Ibn Saud played the tribal chief for the Ottomans, the adjudicator of disputes,[136] thus demonstrating his strong hand – his system of indigenous control.

The Ottoman alliance did not mean that Ibn Saud would become an Ottoman protégé. Rather, such foreign intervention began to create a "balance-of-power crisis" in Najd. This began when Ottoman control was reduced by Ibn Saud's coercive strength against its demoralised army. Ottoman strength was overextended by imperial demands, such as the Aden conflict, and the collapsing Rashidi dynasty could not control Ibn Saud. The Ottoman empire decided not to promote one ruler over another, and thus surreptitiously combated Saudi strength. The extent to which the Ottomans allied themselves with the maze of different

133 "Initially the Porte paid Ibn Saud a subsidy of 30 Turkish pounds per month, with 100 suits of clothes and some grain – an allowance now [1906] alleged to have been discontinued. In August 1906 his gratuities were reported as paid through the Sheikh of Kuwait 'who deducted it from the land tax on his property'. His father received 90 liras a month." (political agent, Kuwait, to resident, 30 September 1906, R/15/1/745.)

134 In 1904, after the battles of Bukhairiyya and Shinana, he sent a letter of apology to Fakhri Pasha, vali of Basra, requesting that an allowance from the Ottoman government be continued.

135 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", pp. 37–9.

136 Visiting the Ottoman stronghold in al-Hasa, he put to death some bedouin, helping the Ottomans to restore law and order, and claimed to have settled feuds between the Ajman, Bani Haji, and al-Murrah tribes (Lorimer, pp. 1150–1).

tribes vacillated, so much so that at al-Muntafiq in 1910 Ibn Saud and the Kuwaiti forces were beaten by an Ottoman force.[137]

In fact, an underlying antagonism persisted. In 1906 Ottoman troops at al-Shaihiyya tried to bribe some Qusmani bedouin; Ibn Rashid attempted to secure an advantage by having the Ottoman forces moved to Hail; thus Ibn Saud needed to send a forceful ultimatum to the Ottomans,[138] to counter their move and insist on the evacuation of the Ottoman force from Najd. Such antagonisms within the web of Ottoman alliances led Ibn Saud to discuss in 1911 a simultaneous uprising against the Ottomans with his rivals Ibn Rashid, Imam Yahya, Hussein and al-Idrisi. Self-interest, not *wataniyya* (nationalism), was Ibn Saud's motive: "he did not care so far as the rest of Arabia was concerned but he would like to turn the Turks out of Hasa and Katif and reassert Wahhabi power there. The people wanted him to but he was afraid of the Turkish reprisals."[139] In other words, to resolve his power struggle with the Ottomans he needed to take independent action, that is to invade al-Hasa with a military force strong enough to convince the populace he could sustain his rule.

The annexation of al-Hasa was a watershed for Ibn Saud, a new stage in his authority, confirming his power to affect the international sphere. Its effect was finally to entice the British into a formal alliance with him, for al-Hasa was a coastal territory within Britain's strategic arena. The brief, simple treaty which Britain ratified with Ibn Saud proved invaluable later, discouraging Britain from emphatic opposition during his annexation of Hijaz.

In 1913 Ibn Saud occupied al-Hasa without Ottoman resistance.[140] He attacked the Ottoman garrison, some 1,200 strong, of Hufhuf, capital of al-Hasa. Threats to mine the garrison forced its commander to surrender and troops were evacuated to Bahrain. With surprising ease Ibn Saud won access to the Gulf coast from Kuwait to Qatar in the south. He had chosen his moment well. The Ottoman empire was engrossed in Anglo-Ottoman negotiations, was in dire financial straits,

137 Extract from Kuwait diary No. 12, week ending 23 March 1910 (Shakespear to resident, 18 March 1911, R/15/5/27).

138 Hidhlul, pp. 81–3.

139 Shakespear to resident, 18 March 1911, R/15/5/27.

140 Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 268; Troeller, p. 60; Shami'a, p. 108.

facing trouble in Basra and was at war with the Balkans. It was thus powerless to retaliate. Ibn Saud's timing coolly exploited the complex vulnerability of a major power:

> the Amir, his brothers and the Nejd notables in camp all seemed to consider that Turkey's misfortunes and present weakness furnished the best opportunity for Nejd to rid itself of all shadow of Ottoman suzerainty and to drive their troops from Hasa and Katif.[141]

Thus, Ibn Saud's strike exploited social resentment or "reactive nationalist" feeling.[142] As in Hijaz, a pattern emerges of a reactive nationalism rather than a positive ideological agenda, with tribes uniting simply to evict the Ottomans. The numbers joining Ibn Saud against the Ottomans in 1910 were considerable according to Shakespear.[143] His capture of al-Hasa affirmed that the society there was discontent with the Ottomans as a foreign occupying force. In 1911 Ibn Saud considered he already possessed al-Hasa in fact if not in name, through popular support: "His word is law over the whole of Nejd from within two days' march of Hail to the Persian Gulf coastline, excepting only the actual towns of Hofuf, Katif and where the Turkish maintain garrisons, and as far south as the Wadi Dowasir."[144] However, Ibn Saud also invaded al-Hasa because he was under Ottoman pressure to assist practically in Ottoman campaigns and to renounce the British, with whom they suspected he had a secret agreement.[145] If the Ottomans were to make a concerted effort against him on these two issues he could not have withstood them.

Ibn Saud balanced force with diplomatic tactics to salvage the advantages of Ottoman alliance. Writing to the Ottoman authorities in Basra, he turned the situation on its head, complaining that his action "was forced on him by the Turkish subordinate officials", adding

141 Shakespear to resident, 15 May 1913, L/P&S/10/384.

142 To his followers he emphasised that al-Hasa was a haven for raiders whom the Ottomans shielded (Percy Cox to Government of India, 30 May 1913, L/P&S/10/384). This tactic shows Ibn Saud's successful use of societal interests to expand territory.

143 Several thousand tribesmen, 3,500 horsemen and 9,000 camelry (Shakespear to resident, 8 April 1911, R/15/5/27).

144 Shakespear to resident, 15 May 1913, L/P&S/10/384.

145 C. A. Kemball, political resident to secretary of state for India, 6 February 1902, L/P&S/7/142.

that he would willingly represent the Ottomans as vali, and undertake responsibility for the "tranquillity of the district".[146] Thus he used coercion and diplomatic excuses which, strangely enough, increased his legitimate status and operative power within the Ottoman infrastructure. His efficiency within the framework further enhanced his authority. One contemporary report claims that Ibn Saud promptly restored order and made the roads safe, whereas under the corrupt Ottomans "the local conditions bordered on anarchy".[147] Thus he also showed the local society that he could outperform the Ottoman administration.

Here, Ibn Saud's strategy towards both the Ottoman empire and Britain was to win allies by intimidating them first. The British government grew alarmed at reports of his interference in Qatar,[148] where the Ottomans had a garrison, and of his possible interest in Oman. In 1914, the foreign office wrote to Hakki Pasha:

> important British interests and obligations in the Gulf . . . made it impossible for us to ignore Bin Saud and pretend to treat the province and coast of Hassa as politically derelict. We must necessarily have relations with someone in de facto authority, and the Turks having evacuated the region we must deal with Bin Saud and were glad to explain the position to them.[149]

The most interesting phrase, here, is that Ibn Saud's regime is perceived as replacing the Ottomans in al-Hasa – not replacing another local leader – as Britain's major partner in the area. Under the "power theory of sovereignty", where sovereignty is defined as supremacy of coercive power,[150] it is interesting to note that in this new use of coercive supremacy Ibn Saud most resembled the major powers. His victory in

146 Percy Cox to GOI, 30 May 1913, L/P&S/10/384.

147 "Bedouins plundered the province at will and even entered the capital city of Hofuf itself . . . robbery and murder were frequent." See Paul Harrison, *The Arab at Home* (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1924), pp. 134 and 1976–7, quoted in Silverfarb, p. 22.

148 "In July 1913 Ibn Saud was said to have written to the Sheikh of Qatar demanding that the Sheikh expel the Turks from his land." (Troeller, p. 51.) GOI to Crew, 19 August 1913, No. 22076/37510, encl. in IO to FO, 13 August 1913; FO 371/1820.

149 See Turkey: Confidential Print 10569 L/P&S/10/385.

150 Norman P. Barry, *An Introduction to Modern Political Theory* (London, Macmillan, 1981), p. 62.

al-Hasa meant that the empire could neither control nor attract the local society. Coercive power alone gave Ibn Saud international acceptance.[151]

In May 1914 Ibn Saud signed a treaty with the Ottoman empire which had originated with a commission sent to settle ill-feeling over al-Hasa with Ibn Saud; the India Office "understands that the instructions to the Commission are to settle the matter in a friendly way".[152] Ibn Saud's apologists in the India Office maintained later (in 1916) that he had been forced into the treaty: "We were ordered to have nothing more to do with Bin Saud, he lost faith in us and concluded a treaty with the Turks at Kuwait. He has a truly Teutonic contempt for the written word, and never meant to keep the treaty."[153] Although copies of this document exist in British files, its validity has always been questioned.[154]

Ibn Saud knew that, even though he had a treaty with the Ottomans, his British relations were sure to be stable: his potential to disrupt Gulf security gave him diplomatic leverage with Britain which had "kept peace on the waters of the Gulf for the past hundred years".[155] Ibn Saud's years of sustained coercion had established a more politically efficient "shortcut coercion", namely threat. Britain had been restrained in its response to his coercive expansion over the previous decade and he did not need to fear its vituperative aggression.

The attack on al-Hasa was a landmark in the creation of social cohesion because, for the first time, Ibn Saud could suppress his enemies, the Ajman, forcefully, particularly their sub-tribe, the Al Safran. His main force was composed of 600 townsmen.[156] Ibn Saud's strike resulted from many frictions dating from 1901 when the Ajman had promised him support in regaining southern Najd but had reneged under pressure from Ibn Rashid, their traditional ally. In terms of the social support that

151 "The Amir said that since he had last spoken of the matter to me Turkey had been through two wars in both of which she had shown her incapability in military matters and that the Arabs consequently felt equal to evicting the Turkish troops form Hasa and Katif with the greatest of ease." (Shakespear to political resident, 13 May 1913, L/P&S/10/384.)

152 See summary of events in Turkish Iraq during April 1914, FO 371/2135.

153 J. Keyes, intelligence section, war office to Sir Mark Sykes, 10 January 1916, FO 371/2769.

154 Political agent, Bahrain, to political resident, 9 September 1913, R/15/2/31.

155 Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, vol. IX (London, Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 240; hereinafter cited as Toynbee, *A Study of History*.

156 al-Zirikli, p. 57 and Shami'a, p. 109.

the capture of al-Hasa attracted, in which members of the embryonic Ikhwan participated, Ibn Saud's use of coercion entered a new stage, legitimised by its association with the spread of Wahhabism.

In August 1914, Britain declared war on Germany and broke off diplomatic relations with the Ottoman empire, and in October dispatched Shakespear to influence Ibn Saud not to side with the Ottomans if hostilities escalated.[157] Ibn Saud was now being courted to negotiate with Britain: time and circumstance were on his side. His coercive capacity had proved highly effective. Ibn Saud's expanding authority was now Weberian *legitime Herrschaft* (legitimate domination). He was "the undisputed Amir of Nejd with his ascendancy recognised in Riyadh, Qasim and by all Bedouin tribes".[158]

At the beginning of this period of Saud's life, one challenge which he faced was the military deficiency of the sedentary Al Saud power base. Initially power relationships and rivalries in Najd were evenly distributed among many players. This contrasted with the relative hegemony that Hussein enjoyed. Ibn Saud therefore found it harder than Hussein to impose a central governing mechanism which offered his competing groups strategies of advantage. Yet with the skill of a natural military commander, he turned his handicap to advantage, fusing groups into tribal coalitions through their desire to prevent Turko-Rashidi power monopolies. The society accepted his control over it as a confederation, with a style of governance offering shared authority, and this became Ibn Saud's advantage in organising coercive acts. In social science theory such coalitions support one traditional view of authority. Authority in this sense comprises a network of concepts including manipulation and persuasion, the regulation of society through traditional ethos, custom and normative rule. The coalitions were not entirely successful however: one must not confuse the successful restructuring of social confederations with their sustained effectiveness. Even after a long period of effort to establish his rule, Ibn Saud still found it hard to maintain cohesion, given the continual factional realignments. Al-Qasim epitomised the factional

157 Silverfarb, p. 41; see also Sir Percy Cox, "An Account of the Late Captain W. H. I. Shakespear's Mission to Ibn Saud: Dec 1914–Jan 1915", February 1915, FO 882/8, IS/1511.

158 Silverfarb, p. 12.

nature of Najd and, although Ibn Saud had considerably reduced the Al Rashid's power, he did not succeed in defeating them totally for another decade. This period showed Ibn Saud that coercion alone was not sufficient to govern Najd. Coercion was a perpetual *system* in which sapped leaders spent their energy trying to devise controls. In this system, power and coercion were not decisive acts or qualities, for the system had an inherent instability due to its reliance on continually changing confederations. Ibn Saud needed to cease dissipating his energies and focus on expanding power. He needed to find a means of delegating coercion to a distinct agency of state, in order to dominate his society and extend his influence internationally. He needed to devise a new agency of state, to shape the interests of Najd's strongest actors into compliant, legitimised action on his behalf. Since his society did not possess an ideological affinity with nationalism, he might look to religious belief to provide ideological incentives for, historically, religious ideology had enabled the Al Saud to achieve the few instances of coherent Najdi governance.[159]

This objective emphasises the differences in the long-term strategies of Ibn Saud and Hussein. Ibn Saud improved and exploited his tribal links in a much more calculated way and began the transfer of religious and military executive functions from himself to a distinct unit – a transfer typical of developing power structures, where leaders establish differentiated administrative agencies. It shows a developmental advance in Ibn Saud's authority.

Because of Najd's natural strategic irrelevance to foreign powers Ibn Saud did not suffer like Hussein from the challenge of modernising policy interventions. He overcame the Ottoman promotion of Ibn Rashid's power by proving his military supremacy. When the Ottomans in response tried to create a "balance of power", Ibn Saud took military action to

159 The first Saudi realm (1745–1811) was the first coherent state in Najd. "This could not have been possible without the association of Al Saud with religious ideology, for it was only this ideology that forced major confederations of tribes and oasis settlers not only to join in the military operations in the expansion of this state but also to pay a permanent tax to the central financial reserve which meant a considerable limitation on the independence of the tribes" (Vassiliev, p. 66). See also: Ibn Ghanam, *Tarikh Najd*, revised and studied by N. al-Assad (Beirut, Dar al-Shuruq, 1994), Vol. 2, pp. 242–7; O. A. Ibn Bishr, *Unwan al-majd fi tarikh Najd* (Riyadh, Maktabat al-Riyadh al-Hadithah, 1978), Vol. 1, pp. 112–17 and 120.

evict them from Najd and finally from al-Hasa. Through this use of coercion he gained a strategic territory which he could employ to lever Britain into a treaty which, though modest, later proved decisive in achieving paramount Arabian authority.

The political positions of the two leaders differed greatly during this period. Hussein ruled a relatively cosmopolitan infrastructure; Ibn Saud had to operate in less evolved political structures. Yet both were preoccupied with testing strength, with outmanœuvring rivals and achieving territorial gains. The first clash between these leaders established their rivalry for authority. It resulted in an ambiguous victory for Hussein, and in doubts about Ibn Saud's diplomatic consistency. Major differences of style and policy in their leadership were to become more pronounced during the Arab revolt.

2

The foundation of Sharif Hussein's authority 1908–13

Examination of Sharif Hussein's authority begins with his initial period of rule (1908–13), during which the effectiveness of his early political leadership contrasts markedly with his erratic and unskilled governance in later periods. His resources were limited almost solely to traditional dynastic links and opportunities offered by the sociopolitical structures of Hijaz, an arena where he did not succeed in asserting himself fully. Because theories of authority cannot be separated from specific social structures, how Hussein exploited these dynamics to legitimise his authority and justify coercion must be considered.

Initially, his authority was derived from interdependent religious, political and social–tribal traditions, ethics, sanctions and rewards enabling social control. When these variables combined effectively, as in this period, his authority flourished and was further enhanced by the formal endorsement of the Ottoman empire which supported it with its infrastructure, at least to the extent that the status quo of the sharifate office was allowed to continue.[1] Although Hussein's title derived from an ancient, respected tradition, his rule was initially established by his appointment by the Ottoman sultan. However, the sultan and his protégés at this time were threatened by the Young Turks whose ideological claim to power was based on a progressive transformation of the empire. Hussein needed to withstand the Young Turks' policy interventions, while profiting from their political, military and secular infrastructure in Hijaz, although in this instance their modernisation efforts conflicted with the norms of his traditional leadership, since he was a religious authority whose dynastic right to rule had been recognised for a millennium. As a result his society and the international faithful expected him to uphold traditional and religious ideological concepts, not to revise them. This conflict of

1 As described below an attempt was made in 1911 to discontinue the office of sharif.

interests complicated his concurrent authorities as Ottoman official and sharif of Mecca.

Hussein's early political strategies demonstrate that his first priority was to acquire personal political and social control of Hijaz, to become more than an Ottoman figurehead, to recover the lost powers of his sharifate/amirate, with their interplay of religious and traditional controls.[2] These lost controls, such as the collection of taxes and the adjudication over tribal and urban disputes, had been substantially undermined during the rule of earlier sharifs by tribal independence, the abuses of the privileges of office by these sharifs and the imposition of superior Ottoman coercive strength and administrative structures. By recovering them, Hussein could use his sharifate/amirate authority to extend his political power, although the religious norms of his rule might at the same time restrict his political activities.

In order to secure control Hussein needed to create cohesive social support; however, the Hijaz was socially fragmented and ethnically mixed,[3] and tribal hereditary caste groups operated through reciprocal satisfaction of interests. Thus Hussein needed to co-ordinate disparate values into social unity, by emphasising his adjudicating role as amir (the judiciary system was an important tool for extending social control), or by creating confederated tribal resistance against Ottoman dominance.

2 For "without diaries or letters to tell us what the Hashemites were thinking before the war . . . one can so far only judge their aims and interests by what has been recorded of their actions." See Mary C. Wilson, "The Hashemites, the Arab revolt, and Arab nationalism", *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih and Reeva S. Simon (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991); hereinafter cited as Wilson, "The Hashemites" and as Khalidi, Anderson, Muslih and Simon, *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*).

3 Ernest Gellner, "Tribalism and state in the Middle East", *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, ed. Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990), p. 109; hereinafter cited as Gellner, "Tribalism". There was an "extraordinary ethnic and social diversity of the Muslim communities in the chief towns. Muslims from all over the world came to the Hijaz on pilgrimage . . . many stayed, and large resident communities of Javanese, Indians, Malaysians, Algerians, Egyptians, and so on, came into existence." See also William Ochsenwald, "Ironic origins: Arab nationalism in the Hijaz, 1882–1914", *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, ed. Khalidi, Anderson, Muslih and Simon, p. 200; hereinafter cited as Ochsenwald, "Ironic origins".

To regain control over the tribes, he might reimpose the traditional sharifate taxation system,[4] although imposing taxes required him to assert a coercive power which he did not intrinsically possess. One vulnerability was his dependence on Ottoman garrisons which, if used, might undermine his social popularity. Hussein needed to employ a complex strategy, since he also wanted to establish his independence from the Ottomans, particularly the reformists, to prevent them from curbing his power. Clearly, to do this he needed to acquire his own coercive arm, but it was crucial that his motive for executive action should coincide with that of his tribal groups. Thus the tasks to be done to establish his authority and control were considerable.

Initial political and religious bases of Hussein's authority

The religious and political bases of Hussein's authority were in some senses contemporary, in others, traditional and historical. The contemporary element was that the Ottoman sultan and caliph exercised his power to appoint Hussein within a specific political context. In contrast to Ibn Saud who struggled to wrest control over Najd, Hussein was formally placed in office in Hijaz by an external imperial force. The historical source of authority was the Hashemite dynasty's tradition of rule in Hijaz.[5] However, while Hussein had a strong claim to succeed to office derived from traditional rights of blood descent from the Prophet, others within his dynasty contested this claim on the basis of the longstanding rivalry between the Zaidi and Awuni branches.[6] His right of succession was consequently by no means certain.

Hussein's spiritual and temporal positions as sharif and amir must be distinguished one from the other before discussing his use of them. The title "sharif" has obscure origins. Literally, it means "noble",[7] and by

4 Hussein was assisted in his power expansion by the fact that the collection of the camel tax, for example, was considered the sharif's ancient right.

5 Full details of the origin, history and meanings of the sharifate are given in Gerald De Gaury, *Rulers of Mecca* (New York, Dorset Press, 1991), pp. 64–5; hereinafter cited as De Gaury, *Rulers*.

6 Saleh al-Amr, "The rulers of Hejaz and Ottoman rule, 1869–1914" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Leeds, 1974), p. 52–3; hereinafter cited as al-Amr. See also De Gaury, *Rulers*, pp. 244–55.

7 De Gaury, *Rulers*, pp. 64–5. Al-Husry describes it as descended from the Prophet, courageous, with a clean pedigree, good manners, and with an educated

the Fatimid Caliphate period was used to describe descendants of the Prophet's daughter. By the thirteenth century the title was used for rulers of Mecca, whose leadership in Mecca had existed from AD 480 – before the rise of Islam – until 1925.[8] The general title "ashraf" (pl. of sharif) denoted status, not responsibility. They were "Lords of Lords", with the grand sharif of Mecca as titular head. This identity of blood was at first reinforced with, and then replaced by, an identity of faith, the bond of a common acceptance of Islam and common membership of the Islamic community. The nucleus of the later Islamic polity was the religio-political community which the Prophet founded and led in Medina – the *umma dun al-nas,* the community distinguished from the rest of mankind.

Hussein's religious authority derived from the origins of his faith, for the Quraish claim to descend from Ishmael, son of Abraham. Thus, although the sultan appointed the sharif of Mecca, the Ottomans could not destroy the sharifate office itself. As the British vice-consul in Jeddah noted in 1879: "The sharifate is not an appointment of which the Sultan can dispose of at will, it is hereditary . . . the sharif is regarded with far too great veneration by all mussulmans and his disposition, without serious cause, would most probably create serious trouble."[9]

The amirate of Mecca involved a set of distinct practices, related to the culturally accepted concept of authority, where aristocratic equality was embodied in the group rather than individuals. Arabians had no titles, in the Western sense of the word, other than "sharif" and "sheikh", or "elder". Thus from the time of the Prophet Muhammad until the twentieth century AD, the term "amir" was "a style rather than a title". As De Gaury says: "'amir' is no more than a 'leader', and the democracy of the race is seen in the usage of these words and in the lack of formal titles".[10]

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broad-mindedness. Sati' al-Husry, *al-Bilad al-'arabiyya wal dawla al-uthmaniyya* (Beirut, Dar al-Ilm lil Malayin, 1965); hereinafter cited as al-Husry.

8 In the thirteenth century the sharifate remained in the family branch of Amr-Hashim, great-grandfather of the Prophet, through to Hassan, grandson of the Prophet. See De Gaury, *Rulers,* pp. 64–5 and Amin Sa'id, *Asrar al-thawra al-'arabiyya al-kubra wa-ma'sat al-Sharif Husayn* (Beirut, Dar al-Katib al-'Arabi, 1960), p. 43; hereinafter cited as Sa'id, *Asrar.*

9 British consul at Jeddah, James Zohrab, 12 March 1879, FO 195/1255.

10 De Gaury, *Rulers,* pp. 64–5

The amir performed administrative secular functions such as adjudicating disputes and collecting tributes, often without distinction as to whether he performed these as sharif or amir. This religious–political fusion of broad paternalistic care was traditionally intrinsic to social values, adding political power to the sharifate. The contribution of religion to determining authority was immense, as Ibn Khaldun has noted,[11] for little else existed to generate governance: "Social groups had an organisational and value structure similar to that of religious organisations. Status and such social institutions as slavery depended to a considerable degree upon religious factors."[12]

Hussein's position thus gave him control through the non-bureaucratic process of satisfying popular interests as expressed to him directly in audiences. Beyond the tribal decision-making systems, particularly in the urban communities, such an interest-processing system was Hijaz's closest approximation to a unifying political system in the fragmented structure. His capacity for civil–judicial control made him an indispensable civil ruler alongside the Ottoman nominee.[13] Moreover, just before Hussein's appointment, the status of amir had been enhanced: the amir's allowance had been increased by the Porte to one thousand pounds sterling a month. With this, in addition to private means largely derived from lands in Egypt and Mesopotamia, Hussein maintained a large household and a strong bodyguard. Recognised as the chief executive officer in Mecca itself, he enjoyed territorial independence there and at Taif, with the right to keep official representatives to watch his own and Meccan interests in Jeddah, Medina and elsewhere.[14]

The amir's opportunity to gain coercive authority over his society by cooperating with the Ottoman system was clear, if limited. When a new amir took office, he sought chiefly local autonomy, subsidies from

11 Ibn Khaldun declared that dynasties with wide powers and substantial royal authority have their origin in religion (Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 125–7; hereinafter cited as Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*).

12 William Ochsenwald, *Religion, Society, and the State in Arabia: The Hijaz under Ottoman Control 1840–1908* (Ohio, Ohio State University Press, 1984), p. 113; hereinafter cited as Ochsenwald, *Religion*.

13 Hussein bin Muhammad Nasif, *Madi al-Hijaz wa hadiruh* (2 vols., Cairo, Maktabat wa Matba'at Khudayr, 1930–1), p. 60; hereinafter cited as Nasif.

14 D. G. Hogarth, *Hedjaz before World War One* (Cambridge, Oleander Press, 1978), p. 4; hereinafter cited as Hogarth, *Hedjaz*.

Constantinople, and guarantees from external attack. In return, he assisted the Ottomans in maintaining order to protect the pilgrimage, and acknowledged the superior power of the Sultan.[15] Thus the amir mediated between the Ottomans and the tribes.[16] The system was that each semi-autonomous tribal unit kept its singular organisation and laws,[17] but individuals could appeal against tribal verdicts to the amir as a higher authority[18] whose verdict was final. Potentially this made the amir the ultimate indigenous authority with absolute executive discretion. His authority conformed with Weber's category of traditional authority, where popular consent for a form of rule is deeply attached to precedent, and the ruler's legitimacy derives from popular assumptions that traditional rules will perpetuate. Hussein's office was connected to ancient traditional rules and genealogical veneration,[19] an Arab ethos predating the great Islamic conquests and socially accepted.[20] As sharif, Hussein was empowered to administer the Holy Places, with extensive power of appointment over the bureaucratic structure for supervising the hajj.[21] Thus, administering the pilgrimage demonstrated his traditional authority.

The circumstances which determined Hussein's appointment to the sharifate involved political uncertainties which seem in hindsight to

15 Ochsenwald, *Religion*, pp. 3–7.

16 The relative independence of the ashraf and the amir of Mecca from the Ottoman vali derives from distinctive social status within Hijaz, wealth and tribal authority (interview with Mr al-Bilady in Mecca, January 1994).

17 T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1940), pp. 68f.

18 The tribes solved their disputes in different ways, either through a *Qadi* or *Arif*, or a council. See al-Amr, p. 115; Muhammad al-Batnuni, *al-Rihlat al-hijaziyya* (Cairo, Matba'at al-Jamaliyah 1911), p. 38; al-Husry, p. 241.

19 Caliph Umar I advised Arabs: "Learn your genealogies, and be not like the Nabataeans of Mesopotamia who, if asked as to their origin, reply: 'I came from such and such a village'." See Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 237.

20 Sa'id, *Asrar*, p. 43. Taxation was socially accepted, but nonetheless queried, especially by outside observers: "Has the Sherif any or what right to impose the tax? Old time-out-of-mind customs admit that the tax of one dollar per head of camel entering the gates of Mecca . . . has always been levied and periodically revived." (G. P. Devey, "memo respecting HH the Grand Sherif", 14 October 1902, FO 195/2126.)

21 According to the British consul, G. P. Devey, the pilgrim functionaries went to the sharifs for anything connected with the hajj and 'Awn partitioned the whole earth into districts assigned to special *mutawwifs* for the oversight of pilgrims, 14 October 1902, FO 195/2126.

have affected the entire course of his rule. His appointment to the sharifate as an office was an elevation of his position and prestige since, until then, for almost eighteen years,[22] he had been forced to live in Constantinople, assuming a minor, consultative political role in Ottoman government.[23] The sultan selected Hussein for office to create a number of political advantages: firstly, to signify Hijazi subjection and secondly to associate his own rule with the Prophet, thereby enhancing his image as leader of the Islamic empire for he reckoned that Hussein's religious prestige might protect him against internal Ottoman opposition.[24] The sultan also appointed Hussein in the hope that he would become a focus for opposition to the modernising reformists of the Ottoman empire. This political crisis between the reformists and the Sultan had been brewing since 1876, when Sultan Abdul-Hamid reversed the liberal reforms he had introduced only as an expedient to appease the Great Powers,[25] a move which increased political resentment against his monopoly of power.[26] Such reformist pressures on the sultan's authority had always affected the sharifate. For instance in 1876, after the sultan abandoned the modern reforms, he transferred the right of succession to the sharifate from the Zaidi to the Awni branch of the Hashemites. The sultan's removal of hostile sharifs demonstrated that support from the sharifate related significantly and consistently to the legitimacy of the sultan's rule. For instance, the sultan doubted the loyalty of the rightful successor, Hussein's uncle, and thus transferred succession to Hussein's generation.[27]

22 D. G. Hogarth's report on mission to Jeddah, January 1918, FO 141/734.

23 The sultan had appointed him a "Counsellor of the Empire" (Randall Baker, *King Husain and the Kingdom of the Hejaz* (Cambridge, Oleander Press, 1979), p. 10; hereinafter cited as Baker, *King Husain*).

24 George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (New York, Putnam, 1938), p. 103; hereinafter cited as Antonius.

25 R. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856–1876* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 374; hereinafter cited as Davison.

26 In Eversley's opinion, "There was never a more centralised and meticulous despotism." See Lord Eversley, *The Turkish Empire* (London, T. F. Unwin, 1917), p. 317.

27 With the death of Awn al-Rafiq in 1905, the natural successor by line of descent was Hussein's uncle, Abdallah, who was suspected by the Ottomans of participating in Osman Pasha's plots against them in 1882.

Hussein's appointment was prompted by an ultimatum from the Young Turks[28] whose Committee of Union and Progress (CUP)[29] in July 1908 forced the sultan to restore the 1876 constitution.[30] The Young Turks then deposed the sharif and the vali of Hijaz[31] because of their opposition to constitutional reform. However, shortly after they had chosen a new candidate for the sharifate, their candidate died and the sultan moved quickly to reassert his power of appointment,[32] to ensure a relatively loyal Hijazi religious leader in Hussein, presenting the CUP with a *fait accompli.*[33]

It should be pointed out that Hussein himself seized the opportunity to secure power after the death of the CUP candidate by immediately applying for the *firman.* Hussein profited from his rival Ali Heidar's alignment with the CUP and won support from a traditionalist "Old Guard" group at Court.[34] As for the sultan, his selection of Hussein was unenthusiastic, and reflected a lack of sympathetic candidates.[35] What made Hussein an acceptable compromise choice was his relative degree of loyalty to the sultan and lack of reforming zeal,[36] whereby the sultan ensured that the future Hijazi administration would embarrass the CUP. If harrying the CUP should lead Hussein into political trouble, then no doubt the sultan would find him expendable. Seen from this angle, the sultan's expedient appointment of Hussein was a defensive action whereby Hussein would bear the brunt of the consequences of the sultan's retaliation. Hussein was thus manipulated by the sultan for political expediency, which arguably made the foundation of his power, authority and influence uncertain from the outset.

28 Antonius, p. 103.

29 The CUP was "the most radical organisation in the Young Turk movement". Its manifesto of 1908 was sent to Great Power consuls to reveal the influence of its society. "Right from the start the CUP worked to destroy its anti-Christian, anti-foreign image." See Feroz Ahmad: *The Young Turks, the Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics* (Cambridge, Oleander Press, 1969), pp. 1, 2, 7 and 9.

30 In July 1908, the Third Army in Turkey revolted and presented the sultan with an ultimatum demanding that he restore the 1876 constitution or abdicate.

31 Baker, *King Husain,* p. 15.

32 Hogarth, *Hedjaz* (pp. 35–46) describes the organisation of hereditary chiefdoms.

33 Baker, *King Husain,* p. 16.

34 This group was headed by Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha and included influential allies such as Said Halim Pasha.

35 Baker, *King Husain,* p. 16.

36 British consul at Jeddah, 12 March 1879, FO 195/1255.

However, in his new important office Hussein did not need to be a puppet. In one sense he took office as a member of the Ottoman élite, but at the same time he was a controlled Ottoman functionary whose years in political exile had denied him practical political experience. The ambiguous circumstances of his appointment, along with the other dubious foundations of his power, one might argue, were almost sure to fail him eventually.

The social foundation and development of Hussein's authority in Hijaz

In this period more than in any other Hussein succeeded in achieving a broad social consensus and using it to effect politically advantageous change. His success depended essentially on the relationship between his desired form of government and that desired by his society. Hijaz was not politically organised around centre–periphery structures or modern–traditional dichotomies. Rather, it was a *mélange* of social organisations in which the traditional administration which Hussein headed was simply one of many power structures. In the incoherent Arabian political structures, a leader secured cohesive power by appealing to a broad range of groups, tribal and urban. A clear tribal–urban divide did exist in Hijaz, where the townsmen and merchants lived and operated politically in a different manner from the bedouin tribes. So sharp was this divide that the bedouin refused to mix with the crowd of townspeople awaiting the new sharif's arrival at the landing-stage in December 1908: instead they went separately to his house.[37] Of all the societies in the provinces of the Arabian peninsula, Hijazi society was uniquely fragmented. Lack of urban political unity derived from the influx of pilgrims, and the townspeople regarded the nomads as dangerous and barbaric.[38] However, as shall be seen later, this divide was not always disadvantageous to Hussein. During the Hijaz railway crisis, for example, he was able to fuse the interests of these very different groups to support and affirm his authority. Thus the major challenge for Hussein was to enlist broad support, despite the heterogeneous nature of Hijazi society and his own

37 See Despatch No. 5 of 5 December 1908, FO 195/2286.
38 Ochsenwald, *Religion*, p. 30.

differentiated status as a member of the ashraf, followers of a rigorous caste system, which distinguished them from their associated groups.[39]

Living conditions in Mecca and Jeddah had improved only minimally under Ottoman rule and were generally described by Europeans as poor. Incidents before Hussein's appointment, after the Young Turks' constitutional proclamation in 1908, show that their inhabitants had a limited understanding of constitutional equality. A despatch from the Foreign Office in 1908, for example, said:

> The town [Jeddah] was in a state of great excitement and the Government seemed paralysed as big crowds of common labourers who form the greater portion of the population of this town, understanding the meaning of *Hurria* [liberty] to be freedom given to everybody to do as he liked, openly discussed that now nobody could punish them for anything.[40]

This reaction illustrates an important social trend. Hussein's predecessor as sharif had tried to use his religious authority to attack CUP secular reforms but had won no popular support. Respect for religious authority did not affect the public appetite for "Hurria" (freedom), possibly because the townsmen were satisfied with conditions under the Ottomans: "Most of them were reasonably happy with the Ottoman–Emirate Government. Popular goals that were generally achieved included minimal government, the continuation of gifts of grain and money from the Ottoman Empire . . . There were few expressions of opposition to Ottoman rule by the townspeople."[41]

This approval contrasted strongly with the bedouin outlook. Thus political beliefs varied greatly between social groups. Ottoman reforms before 1900 had been confined to Mecca, Medina and Jeddah. The interior and bedouin areas were neglected, and the tribal *maslaha* (self-interest) was not enhanced by Ottoman rule, but rather threatened by Ottoman economic and coercive restrictions: "Nomads were often unhappy with the Ottomans, especially when the imperial forces shortchanged the protection money paid to the tribes as tribute for safe pilgrimage, or

39 Nasif, pp. 16–18.
40 See Despatch No. 39 of 25 August 1908, FO 195/2286.
41 *Ibid.*

when the central government on rare occasions attempted to impose its rule directly in the countryside."[42]

Besides this discontent, it was noted that bedouin society in Hijaz was singularly fragmented,[43] which also encouraged unrest. Hijazi tribes had no extended pattern of hierarchical organisation, and the major, powerful Hijazi tribes like the Harb had no paramount chief to control all the tribal sections as did Najdi tribes.[44] The Hijaz tribes united only temporarily under a chief's command if threatened by external forces.[45] Major tribes possessed established territories: the Harb controlled the Mecca–Jeddah route, while the Utaiba patrolled eastern Hijaz. Each tribal chief was selected by the tribe's members according to criteria which included blood relations with other prominent tribes, wealth, or commanding character. The separate laws of each tribe were accommodated by both sharif and vali.

The urban agitation after the CUP's constitutional proclamation was one basis of political discontent which Hussein could exploit to unite his society. Self-interest and anarchic resistance to domination in general are a typical ethos of the bedouin when they interact with larger powers. In this instance an urban–bedouin unity of attitude existed because both townspeople and tribes wanted Hijaz to remain semi-autonomous. Clearly, they reacted to having control over their own interests taken away from them, rather than in response to developed ideological motivations. Further evidence of this is the fact that the Ottomans' subsequent invitation to share power through the constitutional selection of controlling officials met with apathy, attributed to a popular belief that electoral registration might lead to military conscription.[46]

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42 Ochsenwald, "Ironic origins", p. 191.

43 A. Wavell, *A Modern Pilgrim in Mecca* (London, Constable & Company, 1918), p. 59; hereinafter cited as Wavell.

44 There were head sheikhs of each division, such as the Bani Musa division of the Juhaina, and chief sheikhs for each tribe, as well as sub-tribe leaders (FO 686/10). In contrast the Najdi Shammar were politically more cohesive. See Madawi al-Rasheed, *Politics in an Arabian Oasis: The Rashidi Tribal Dynasty* (London, I. B. Taurus, 1991), pp. 19–28; hereinafter cited as al-Rasheed; and Hogarth, *Hedjaz*, p. 17.

45 Marwan R. Buheiry, (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1809–1939*, quoted by Ochsenwald in "Ironic origins", p. 192.

46 Muhammad Omar Rafi', *Makka fi al-qarn al-rabi' 'ashar al-hijri* (Mecca, Nadi Makkah al-Thaqafi, 1981), p. 13; hereinafter cited as Rafi'; and al-Amr, pp. 74–6. The local government of Jeddah, "invited the inhabitants of Jeddah to register themselves as voters". (Despatch No. 53, 5 November 1908, FO 195/2386.)

Hussein's first political tactic was to style himself as a religious leader bound to uphold the shariah law, a daring if calculated ploy, since his predecessor had lost power by promoting religious authority and law against reform. Fortunately, Hussein's promotion of his religious image towards his society made sense, for the conventional Ottoman controls over daily life soon transformed the sudden popular commitment to the CUP into alienation.[47] Inevitably, popular resentment developed against the Ottoman secularists, Hussein, in his role of indigenous religious figure, was able to capitalise on this to attract support. When the CUP attempted to abolish the Hijaz's special status as a religious territory, thus making its inhabitants liable to conscription and central control, violent demonstrations took place necessitating the despatch of Ottoman military reinforcements from Mecca. Responding to a rumour that the sharifate office was to be abolished,[48] Hussein had generated these protests, and mobilised the bedouin to attack Ottoman troops as they journeyed to Jeddah. Popular opposition forced the Ottomans to reaffirm publicly the special status of the sharifate, stressing that "the whole affair was a misunderstanding, that there had never been any plan to reorganise the Hedjaz or be rid of Hussein . . ."[49] This incident shows that the society's interests had swung swiftly in Hussein's favour against the CUP constitutionalists.

The social foundations of authority in relation to nationalist ideology and economic welfare

When local autonomy was threatened, both the townspeople and the bedouin complained that the CUP interfered in local affairs.[50] It is important to note that at this stage such protest from Hussein and his people was not motivated by any developing Arab nationalist sentiment: initially he did not promote a nationalist agenda and, significantly, the Hijazi milieu, with its Ottoman garrison, did not breed nationalist

47 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 24, 5 October 1916; Sir John Bagot Glubb, *Britain and the Arabs* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1959), p. 111; hereinafter cited as Glubb, *Britain and the Arabs*.

48 See Jeddah Despatch No. 64, 2 December 1909, FO 195/2286.

49 Monaghan to Lowther, 15 December 1908, FO 195/2286.

50 In 1909 local disturbances fanned by Hussein prevented the Ottomans from removing Hijaz's special status (Despatch No. 64, 2 December 1909, FO 195/2286).

sentiment[51] as occurred in Syria and Iraq: "the intellectuals of Damascus had no force, the tribesmen of Arabia no political objectives."[52] The notion of forming a pan-Arab coalition was merely discussed sporadically by regional leaders in between their skirmishes. For example, in 1911 Imam Yahya of Yemen wrote to Hussein urging him to join in countering the Ottoman atrocities in Yemen.[53] Therefore, no sustained interest existed in a regional alliance of self-governing states. Indeed, between 1905 and 1908,

> The amirs did nothing to foster Arab nationalism . . . although the cultural revival of Arabic learning was in full sway in Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, there were no signs of a similar renaissance in the Hejaz. The professional groups so influential in the spread of nationalistic ideas elsewhere – secularly minded teachers, newspaper writers, army officers – were few in number and often were not ethnically Arabs.[54]

Thus it seems unlikely, as is sometimes claimed, that CUP interference made Hijazi popular consciousness tend toward Arab nationalism and become receptive to general currents of pan-Arabism throughout the Arab world. It was Hussein personally, and not his society, who began to cultivate ties with Syrian Arab nationalists, receiving encouragement from Arab nationalists abroad when the CUP began seriously to attack his Meccan authority.

Another means by which Hussein extended his authority was by exploiting the economic processes of Hijazi society to satisfy both townspeople and bedouin and to increase prosperity in his society. Ruler and ruled were mutually dependent:

> The poverty of agriculture and the inability of the nomads to organise a state contributed directly to a close linkage between religion and politics. Hijazis needed exterior help to be able to live in the towns, and this help was predicated upon the holiness of

51 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 32, 26 November 1916.
52 Glubb, *Britain and the Arabs*, p. 58.
53 H. Wahbah, *Arabian Days* (London, Arthur Barker Ltd., 1964), p. 68; hereinafter cited as Wahbah, *Arabian Days*.
54 Marwan R. Buheiry, (ed.), *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1809–1939*, quoted by Ochsenwald in "Ironic origins", p. 192.

> Mecca and Medina in Islam . . . Since the amirs were in office longer and enjoyed some local support, they were usually successful in reaching their goals."[55]

Economic control over society was important both practically and as a political ritual whereby the sharif affirmed his political authority. By offering financial incentives Hussein also enhanced the society's perceptions of his religious legitimacy.[56] He could build a cohesive social structure from the fact that income for both the nomadic majority and settled urban minority derived mainly from the pilgrimage. He thus enhanced his control over the flow of revenue, deciding the extent of payments to guides, pilgrims and camel-drivers, and either taking all proceeds, sharing them with the vali or redistributing them as military wages. This economic pattern has been identified by Weber as typical of traditional leadership: the ruler's exchange of land or income in return for military service.[57] Thus, Hussein's organisation of his financial distribution system affected the economic pressures felt by his society, determining its economic health and consent to his rule. For instance, on arriving in Hijaz he relinquished his right to camel dues and channelled this money to improve the Jeddah water supply.[58] Such acts affirm Weber's comment on traditional leadership: "the consequences for the economic order are in the first instance a function of the mode in which the group exercising imperative authority is financed".[59]

The traditional system of taxation was also a ritual through which the society affirmed the leader's authority. Therefore Hussein prevented any challenges to this fiscal expression of loyalty, for instance in his punitive reaction to al-Idrisi's attempts in 1910 to exact tributes within Hijaz.[60] Revenue from taxation offered a concrete source of power, enabling the

55 Ochsenwald, *Religion*, p. 221.

56 The Hijazi ulama were financially dependent on their rulers (Ayman al-Yassini, *Religion and the State in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (Boulder and London, Westview Press, 1985), p. 48; hereinafter cited as al-Yassini).

57 Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* (London, Macmillan, 1964), pp. 351–2; hereinafter cited as Weber.

58 Monaghan to Lowther, 5 December 1908, FO 195/2286.

59 Weber, p. 432.

60 Talal Assad, "The bedouin as a military force", *The Desert and the Town*, ed. Cynthia Nelson, (Berkeley, Institute of International Studies, 1973), pp. 61–73; hereinafter cited as Assad. See also Louise Sweet, "Camel raiding of north Arabian

purchase of arms or loyalty,[61] where "the productive capacity of individual economic units is to a large extent preempted for the needs of the governing group".[62] Hussein's revenues from the society were considerable and popularly perceived as his self-evident right.[63] Moreover, to his advantage, his expenditure upon social administration was limited compared to his fiscal income: he was not liable to pay official or military salaries, but merely to finance his own guards, personal expeditions and placatory payments to tribes. Taxation gave him a certain reserve of strength for political bargaining, especially as it could be applied in an implicitly punitive manner. However, while the Arabian norm of taxation promoted stability, it also provoked instability when too severely applied; therefore, the extent of Hussein's fiscal demands could crucially affect his authority, and in this period his moderate taxation stabilised his control.

However, the most important economic responsibility of any Hijazi ruler which reflected on his authority was ensuring the safety of the caravan and pilgrimage routes.[64] Control over these routes meant, broadly, control over the society – a secular–economic control, as much as a legitimising religious duty. In order to achieve such control Hussein needed first to control the bedouin who endangered the routes.[65] Yet since his form of authority was not a tribal chieftaincy, he could not draw on any personal tribal coercive force to suppress the bedouin. Vickery has asserted that the sharif usually extended his authority over

bedouin", *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East* (2 vols., New York, National History Press, 1970), pp. 274–81; hereinafter cited as Sweet.

61 Hogarth, *Hedjaz*, p. 47.

62 Weber, p. 355.

63 In Despatch No. 66 of 2 December 1908, FO 195/2386, they are calculated at about £20,000 a year plus property given to him on his initial arrival. (See Wahbah, *Arabian Days*, p. 68.)

64 Joseph Kostiner, "The Hashemite 'Tribal confederacy of the Arab revolt', 1916–1917", *National and International Politics in the Middle East – Essays in Honour of Elie Kedourie*, ed. David Ingram, (London, Frank Cass & Co., 1986), p. 137; hereinafter cited as Kostiner, "The Hashemite 'Tribal confederacy'"; and "Transforming dualities: tribe and state formation in Saudi Arabia", *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East* ed. P. Khoury and J. Kostiner (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1990), p. 228. Hereinafter cited as Kostiner, "Tribe and state formation".

65 See Despatch No. 94 of 10 October 1903, FO 195/2148; see also *Admiralty: Geographical Handbook of Arabia* (London, Naval Intelligence Division, H.M.S.O., 1920), Vol. 1; hereinafter cited as Admiralty, *Geographical Handbook*.

the bedouin by making agreements with specific tribes;[66] however, enforcing such nominal authority was difficult, and the sharifs preceding Hussein had relaxed their hereditary control over tribes on the Hijaz–Najd border. Thus one of Hussein's first strategies in office was to reclaim the ancient sharifian rights to control of the Utaiba and the Harb,[67] a claim which led to his first military conflict with Ibn Saud, a confrontation which was never clearly resolved.[68]

Control of the tribes required a forceful leadership style so Hussein boosted his charismatic appeal by staging events such as the magnificent opening of a festival prior to an early pilgrimage under his leadership.[69] He also reinforced his paternalistic religious image by demonstrating care for the welfare of robbed Javanese pilgrims, at least once paying compensation out of his own pocket.[70] His dutiful cultivation of image is described in one partisan account: "He does not refrain from stretching out his hand to salute a rough looking and dirty Arab . . . He is very just and merciful, and the Arabs prefer him to all his predecessors of the Ashraf who ruled Mecca, and greatly respect him."[71]

It was essential for Hussein to negotiate with the tribes because they had the practical power and opportunity to control the roads. A barter system often operated between the ruler and his subjects, dependent on mutual coercion: to save face, the submitting tribes might threaten the sharif that they would plunder unless he compensated them financially. This threat was traditional: the tribes were not blackmailing their ruler so much as directing him toward a means of securing their support.

A significant factor in Hussein's enlisting of tribal allegiance was the way in which his economic practices with regard to the tribes tended towards a formal administrative reorganisation of their economic structure. Through the agreements that he established with the tribes, whereby each

66 C. Vickery, "Arabia and the Hedjaz", *Journal of Contemporary Asian Studies*, Vol. X, part 1, 1923, p. 49; hereinafter cited as Vickery.

67 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 41, 6 February 1917.

68 The bloodless expedition in 1910 which ended with the kidnap of Ibn Saud's brother, Sa'd, resulted in Ibn Saud's pledge to pay various tributes; the sharif was happy with this, but Ibn Saud never did pay out any monies and subsequently denied any victory for Hussein (Despatch of 11 October 1910, FO 195/2350).

69 Vickery, p. 49.

70 FO 195/2350, 3 November 1909.

71 Captain G. S. Symes, 19 July 1915, paper B 211, L/P&S/10/523, reporting an interview with an Arab informant.

would protect certain caravan routes on commission, he channelled and exploited tribal military independence into a personal policing capability. He made the tribes economically secure but simultaneously dependent on him. By controlling trade routes, he also made himself indispensable to merchants, thus infiltrating their economic structures. The relations which he had established with the bedouin made him their de facto political representative with the Ottomans.

Hussein's coercive force and the associated society

Coercive force was the ruler's essential means of controlling the tribes, for coercion was a currency which the tribes used themselves and respected in others: outside the cities nearly all adult males were armed. The tribes' capacity for coercion was their "economic product" since their income depended on payments made according to external perceptions of their military capacity. Thus they cultivated their military strength as other societies cultivated rice, and the only limits they placed on violence were those determined by norms of tribal solidarity and customary rituals of raiding.

The Hijazi political structure, with its dual Ottoman and indigenous coercive systems, afforded Hussein two separate means of enhancing his executive control over society. First, one must consider his successful exploitation of the military resources of the Ottomans to win tribal respect, which he then used to encourage the tribes to participate in his independent coercive acts against the empire which had first militarily empowered him. Initially, Hussein's independent coercive means consisted only of his paid guard of 500 Arab regulars (partly camelry). Early in his reign, the seeming military independence of the tribes enabled him to distance himself from violent actions he instigated, or benefited from indirectly. Thus the tribes were an undeniable coercive weapon, because, outside the cities, the bedouin were perceived as being "practically under no control".[72] Although the Ottomans were reluctant to assist Hussein in settling his local rivalries, they sometimes did so when their interests coincided with his: for instance, after a Mutairi attack on the Hijaz railway, the Hashemite punitive force included 20 Ottoman soldiers and 140 bedouin, joined by "other sherifs [*sic*] who came with the Uteyba

72 See Despatch of December 1909, FO 195/2350.

bedouins from Taif under Ali Bay, another son".[73] Hussein's battle with the Harb after 1909 similarly involved "regular soldiers, Shereefian gendarmes and friendly Bedouins".[74] G. P. Devey, the British consul, reported, "Where misconduct or offence is committed by some petty clan . . . the Sharif generally deals with it promptly and justly: but when on a large scale this is not possible, and resort must be had to less satisfactory measures of intrigue . . ."[75] The latter included Hussein's use of the old ploy of the tribal suzerain: setting one tribe against another if direct force failed.

Important to the relative amount of social control[76] which Hussein achieved was that he subdued the restless al-Hamida tribe near Medina and the dominant Masruh sub-tribe of Harb near Jeddah, which specialised in the pillaging of pilgrim caravans along the Mecca–Medina road.[77] In February 1910, the Harb sheikhs responsible for robberies on the Jeddah–Mecca road assembled at Mecca and promised to cease their activities;[78] in November 1910, reputedly, almost the entire Harb tribe had submitted to "the Grand Shereef representing the Government".[79] Thus he made himself the central influence in securing trade routes and succeeded where the Ottomans had failed. Tribal acquiescence persisted for a time and the *Haj Report for 1910-11* noted that increased safety was due to the sharif.[80] Hussein then re-opened a prison expressly for bedouin in Mecca, and was reported to "assert the power of life and death over the bedouins" by 1911.[81]

When attacks on pilgrims nevertheless continued, the British consul speculated that this showed the "discord existing between the Vali and the

73 FO 195/2350, 229.
74 FO 195/2350, 229.
75 FO 195/2350, 3 November 1909.
76 "Relative" in that Hussein never really won the support of the merchants who resumed grumbling immediately after the revolt began, and whom his officials exploited remorselessly and flagrantly from 1917 to 1924.
77 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 41, 6 February 1917.
78 Sweet, pp. 274–81.
79 British consul in Turkey to ambassador, 2 November 1909, FO 195/2320, 396.
80 *The Haj Report for 1910-11* is enclosed with Despatch No. 26 of June 1911 in FO 195/2376.
81 Jeddah to foreign secretary, Despatch No. 36, 18 September 1911, FO 195/2376.

Grand Shereef,"[82] rather than Hussein's inability to control the bedouin. For instance, the re-emergence of robberies in 1912 was "permitted" by the sharif, as the British consul wryly observed: "I can state without fear of contradiction that no robbery is possible on this road [Mecca–Jeddah highway] unless it is instigated by the Grand Sharif."[83] Some thus believed that the sharif manipulated the ever-present fear of robbery on the Mecca–Jeddah road, and allowed it to flourish in the Medina district through his own emissaries, as a pretext for bringing the area under his control.[84] Encouraging unrest, then making a display of curbing it, usefully reminded the Ottomans and other foreign agencies of their dependence on his authority to negotiate goodwill with the tribes.

Given Hussein's use of Ottoman military resources, it is highly likely that the tribes did not always perceive the distinction between Hussein's power and Ottoman force. Thus, in a sense, Hussein gained coercive prestige by making himself an intermediary within a larger process of submission, exploiting his ambiguous political position as an Ottoman official and a traditional ruler gradually to draw the tribes under his control. This was a source of prestige for him with his social groups and augmented his authority substantially. By making terms with the local tribes, Hussein gained leverage with the vali, and ultimately enhanced his value to the Porte.[85] It is evident that control over the tribes had a cumulative effect on his authority and later enabled him to use coercion to undermine Ottoman reformist policy. Ultimately, Hussein substantially incorporated the tribes into the central structure of his rule, through which he influenced their military power.

How Hussein used coercive strategies to assert his authority over his regional rivals and ultimately to challenge the Ottomans and their policy in Hijaz is interesting. This second phase in his coercive activity demonstrates the transition in the essential composition of his military arm from the Ottoman forces to the indigenous tribes. A tactic of this second phase of coercion was to make use of bedouin groups in campaigns against neighbouring rivals outside Hijaz; this tactic not only diverted

82 See Despatch No. 56 of 6 October 1909, FO 195/2320.

83 See Despatch No. 25, 5 June 1912, FO 371/1445.

84 See Minute by Louis Mallet, L/P&S/10/385, 1914. In a way, this was a flattering implication because they assumed he *was* perfectly capable of control, but chose not to assert it.

85 See Jeddah Despatch No. 12, 7 March 1912, FO 424/231.

their attention from their raids on caravans en route to Mecca but also reinforced their sense of loyalty and common purpose with Hussein. He thus expanded his role to become their commander in the field. This was the first major test of his popularity among the bedouin, and was a strategy which worked. Although he won no major military victories, his popularity after such campaigns as the Asir offensive helped prevent the local CUP from undermining his power.

To extend his authority over neighbouring rulers and his "hegemony of loyalty" by subduing tribes outside his traditional territory, he initiated limited military campaigns, beginning with a raid against a traditional enemy, the Al Saud, in 1910, where he appeared immediately successful. In particular, Sa'd ibn Saud, brother to Ibn Saud, was captured in August 1910 and used as a hostage.[86] Such military success, however short-lived, projected an image of an effective leader who was not content to hold a nominal office, and impressed the CUP by revealing his newly effective power. The Ottomans asked him to command a combined Turkish–Arab campaign to quell the Asir rebellion in 1911. Al-Idrisi, the ruler of Asir, had risen against the Ottoman empire but the Italian naval presence near the Yemen coast prevented the Ottomans from dispatching naval forces; they thus decided to use Hussein as their local coercive arm. It is possible that the Ottomans' involvement of Hussein in the Asir campaigns of 1911–12 was an opportunistic attempt to exhaust his power, for, just as the sultan did, the CUP might view the sharif's power as an expendable means to an end. Certainly Hussein did not undertake this expedition out of loyalty to the Sublime Porte: rather, he embarked on it because it enhanced his image to command the Ottoman army to chasten al-Idrisi and southern tribes.

Al-Idrisi, as a leader with ambitions for expansion, posed a threat to Hussein during this period, for in 1910 he had tried to collect *zakat* in the sharif's territory.[87] He boasted that he had brought peace to his domain, and many tribes submitted to him;[88] however, the fact that the Porte attempted to control Asir much less closely than Hijaz[89] favoured

86 See Jeddah Despatch of September 1910, FO 195/2350.
87 See Despatch No. 30 of 11 June 1910, pp. 237–8; FO 195/2350.
88 From "Report on Mecca under the Constitution", 28 June 1910, FO 424/224.
89 See "Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Asiatic Turkey and Arabia", July–September 1910, FO 424/224.

al-Idrisi's ambitions. Moreover, his attempt to base his claim to leadership on religious zeal and piety (since he was a *Sayyid*, a descendant of the Prophet's daughter) was viewed by the Hashemites if not as a challenge to Hashemite religious authority at least as an impertinence. The decisive scale of Hussein's retaliation in the Asir campaign was noted by the British consul who said that Hussein left Mecca with

> about 5000 Bedouins . . . about 900 of them . . . mounted on horses, and the rest on camels, and the Turkish regular artillery consisting of 4 mountain guns and 2 'Hotchkiss' guns. He has been joined at Leet by 2 battalions of Turkish regulars. The object of the expedition is to attack the rebel Seid al Idrissey in Assyr.[90]

The size of the forces that Hussein commanded is disputed,[91] as is the extent of his personal command, since his sons Abdallah and Faisal actually led the engagements deep into Asir,[92] while the sharif remained at Kunfidah with ten battalions of regulars plus his bedouin.

Perhaps contrary to the CUP's expectations, Hussein returned triumphant with his prestige enhanced in British eyes,[93] having effectively exploited an Ottoman crisis to further his political control. While the extent of the fighting at Asir is disputed, Hussein definitely succeeded in relieving Abha which had been besieged for months.[94] The Ottomans concurred in his triumphalism: their official gazette, the *Hijaz*, claimed a sweeping victory, and they honoured the sharif accordingly. The British vice-consul believed that victory went to Hussein's head: "the proud Sharif since his triumphant return to the Hijaz has become exceedingly independent, and is likely to give much trouble to the Turkish government".[95] Through the successful expeditions into Asir and al-Qasim, Hussein had extended the authority of the sharifate over bordering tribes.

The second campaign into Asir did not fare so well, because the defeated al-Idrisi was allied with the Italians during the Turkish–Italian

90 Monaghan, consul in Jeddah, to Sir G. Lowther, 2 May 1911, FO 195/2376.

91 In June 1911 it was reported that he had ten battalions of regular soldiers and bedouin under him (Jeddah to Constantinople, "Extract from Diary of Captain Fazl-ud-din", 20–3 April 1919, FO 141/813/3551).

92 T. E. Lawrence in *Arab Bulletin*, No. 32, 26 November 1916, Vol. 1.

93 Monaghan to Lowther, No. 36, Jeddah, 1911, FO 195/2376.

94 *Ibid.*

95 Monaghan to Lowther, No. 36, Jeddah, 18 September 1911, FO 195/2376.

war. The force which Hussein's sons commanded was again a combined force of bedouin and Ottoman regulars and officers,[96] but al-Idrisi's strength of numbers defeated these combined troops at Zuhra.[97] However, such blows to Hussein's military image were counterbalanced by his achievement in developing such a cohesive military force in the first place – a power base composed of his fractured social groups, and reinforced by Ottoman might. His concerted use of Ottoman and tribal coercive resources won him acceptance by his society and the CUP as *an authority.*

Hussein's religious authority

In considering the religious authority of Hussein and its interplay with the Ottoman political structure of the Hijaz, one might distinguish the sharifate as a purely religious position. However, the religious authority of the role was inextricably linked to the political power associated with the title of Amir. When he took office, the challenge which Hussein had faced as a political ruler was how to find an effective way of operating between the multiple political structures of Hijaz – tribal, urban, Ottoman, indigenous; his sharifate role offered a traditionally established means of achieving this.[98]

Hussein's return to the Hijaz in 1908 as sharif of Mecca demonstrates his determination to promote a religious image: "dressed in pilgrim garb, surrounded by two of his sons and his own irregular Negro guards, called *Bishas*".[99] In reply to a prominent merchant who welcomed him with the words, "Hejaz welcomes the new Emir in whose person we find a new spirit that believes in the new constitutional age and hopes that the new Emir will work under the new constitution, for the Emir is the guiding light of the people," Hussein said that the Qur'an was the only constitution of Hijaz.[100] He is also alleged to have told the Meccan CUP, which greeted him similarly: "it is out of the question for the constitution to be the law of the Haramain which can only be the Sharia'a

96 See Despatch No. 16 of 20 June 1911, FO 424/228.
97 See Despatch of July 1912, FO 424/232.
98 De Gaury, *Rulers*, p. 241.
99 FO 195/2286.
100 Sa'id, *Asrar*, p. 40.

of God and the Sunnah of his Prophet."[101] Through such responses, the political agenda which he immediately projected was that the *shariah* was the most important feature of his rule and source of authority:

> Hussein's political ideology was a pragmatic and flexible one. He had lived long in Istanbul and identified himself as an imperial official. He was, therefore, an Ottoman, but this was true only as long as the empire encouraged the application of the Sharia and allowed for Hejazi autonomy.[102]

It has been argued that Hussein's refusal to adhere to the new constitution and his emphasis on his spiritual right to rule made him a conservative.[103] Without doubt, he came into conflict with the local Turkish inhabitants who supported the aims of the CUP. His religious stance was the perfect pretext for promoting traditional political control by using religious legitimacy. Hussein's speeches show the ideological tension existing between sharif and CUP at the outset of his rule. He had been appointed directly after the constitutional proclamation; nevertheless he chose not to take advantage of the seeming enthusiasm of the townspeople and merchants for the constitution. His adherence to shariah law might have affected the CUP's perception of him in two contrasting ways: first, as a positive sign of his pious intention not to interfere in secular government; and second, as an implicit attack on the legitimacy of the CUP's reformist agenda. The CUP's continued attempts to give its reforms religious legitimacy show that it considered itself vulnerable on the latter front.[104]

Several themes can be identified in Hussein's early period of governance, including his difficult relationship with the CUP, and his reliance on his religious status to make himself a political force. A distinction must be made between the separate political functions of religion in his rule. On the other hand there was his straightforward implementation of

101 'Abd al-Karim Gharaiba, *Muqaddima tarikh al-'Arab al-hadith 1500–1916* (Beirut, 1960), p. 324; hereinafter cited as Gharaiba; King 'Abdallah, *Mudhakkirat al-malik 'Abdallah* (Amman, no publisher given, 1965), p. 40; hereinafter cited as Abdallah, *Mudhakhirat*); Sa'id, *Asrar*, p. 45.

102 Ochsenwald, "Ironic origins", p. 195.

103 al-Amr, p. 140.

104 See Despatch No. 39 of August 25, 1908, Jeddah to Constantinople, FO 195/2286.

religious law (where Hussein opposed the CUP activities as non-Islamic);[105] and on the other there was his use of religion for political ends. In its widest aspect, this latter tactic related to his profitable alliance with the sultan, whose political strategy was the maintenance of the empire as a cohesive whole on the basis of Muslim unity. Significantly, the interplay between Hussein's spiritual and temporal authority proved successful during this period, because by using religious pretext, he safeguarded his power and his religious charismatic status. For instance, when certain speculators brought four carriages into Mecca to provide transport for pilgrims, he had these burnt, on the grounds that "immorality was being practised in them, but really because such carriages had never been hitherto ridden in by anyone in Mecca except the Grand Sharif and the Vali."[106] Thus Hussein's achievement as a politician was that he managed to use his religious authority to accumulate political power, drawing on the traditional norms of his religious authority to negotiate an understanding with the tribes, and to enhance his position by assuming the role of arbitrator in their disputes.

In this period Hussein was relatively safe from indigenous challenges to his religious authority: the Ottoman sultan-caliph[107] posed no threat, finding Hussein's support essential; and the intrigues of deposed sections within his own dynasty proved ineffective.[108] The religious challenge from al-Idrisi merely led to too many religious leaders competing for status in a small region (the vali often entitled himself "*Sheikh-al-Haram*" to weaken the popular focus upon the sharif's religious status) which diluted the potency of al-Idrisi's religious challenge. Nevertheless, by 1912, al-Idrisi's goal had evolved to include the take-over of Mecca and Medina, and the re-establishment of an Arab caliphate.[109] The latter unrealistic claim may have inspired Hussein to consider assuming the caliphate later. During Hussein's early rule two major challenges to his

105 Despatch of 5 April 1909 (FO/195/2320) reports that the CUP had ceased to meet in Jeddah and Mecca while Hussein's privileges were restored, such as the prison he established which had been abolished in August 1908 under his predecessor.

106 FO 195/2376, *c.* June 1910.

107 Hussein in conversation with Colonel Wilson (1917) (*Arab Bulletin*, No. 59, 12 August 1917).

108 Sa'id, *Asrar*, p. 44; Ochsenwald, *Religion*, p. 113.

109 See agent's report of 28 July 1912 on Amir Idris' position since 1906 (FO 424/232).

authority were assaults on his interconnected political and religious strength: first, the Ottoman valis' battle to institute constitutional change, and second, the plan to extend the Hijaz railway to Mecca.

Sharif versus vali

Within the multiple political structures of Hijaz, even the organising structures of its conquerors were multifaceted. On the one hand, the vilayet of Hijaz was like any Ottoman province, experiencing the attempt by Constantinople to transform its local norms of governance into regional administrative systems styled along modern European lines.[110] For almost a century the organisation of the Hijazi vilayet had been affected by reversals of Ottoman policy, which aimed to centralise or decentralise power. The fragility of Ottoman cohesion was apparent; for instance when the local CUP officers forced the previous sharif out of power they came very close to effecting a military *coup* against their own government, but instead they proclaimed themselves advisors to the new Ottoman regime.[111]

The Young Turks' attempts to reform the Hijaz administration showed their assumption that complex, fluid social processes in Hijaz would readily adapt to their policy interventions;[112] yet repeatedly they were proved wrong in having assumed that a new state structure would transform society and ensure control. For instance, social groups in Hijaz resisted Ottoman attempts to differentiate administrative functions essential to a developed state, such as the control over political-administrative structures, particularly over the merchants who had a commercial stake in the traditional form of administrative organisation.[113] Paradoxically,

110 F. Baily, *British Policy and the Turkish Reform Movement* (Cambridge, Mass., Historical Studies, Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 35; Davison, p. 146; B. Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 181 (hereinafter cited as Lewis, *Emergence*); Tawfiq, Berro, *al-'Arab wa al-Turk fi al-'ahd al-dusturi al-'uthmani, 1908–1914* (Cairo, 1960), p. 48.

111 See Despatch No. 39 of 25 August 1908, Jeddah to Constantinople, FO 195/2286.

112 Joel S. Migdal *Strong Societies and Weak States* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 10.

113 Local challenges to Ottoman authority did not always come exclusively from Hussein. For example, before his rule, the Qaim Maqam dismissed customs officials, but a protest was sent to Constantinople over his right to interfere (18 February 1896, FO 195/1943).

idealistic Ottoman reform was accompanied by maladministration and corruption, a dubious organisational system into which the Young Turks introduced a new dynamic, by planning decentralising programmes intended to specify the duties of the provincial councils.[114]

While attempting to reorganise Hijaz as a traditional vilayet, Ottoman reformers had to contend with the exceptional religious nature of the province, where reforms conflicted with the Ottoman empire's further need to reinforce its religious legitimacy via its custodianship of the Holy Places, which began in 1517 when the ashraf first accepted Ottoman sovereignty. However, custodianship of the Holy Places bought prestige at a high price:[115] it was "a source of heavy expense to the Turkish government".[116] Strategically, the province's distance from the Ottoman capital weakened Ottoman authority in Hijaz, creating an imperial dependence on local rulers and tribes to maintain order. The political uncertainties arising from this were not merely national or imperial, but also international. That is, the fact that this distant Ottoman province was lawless and lacking in modern communications' infrastructures, yet was constantly visited by vast numbers of foreign Muslims, might endanger the Ottomans' foreign relations since foreign powers, particularly Britain which was responsible for Indian Muslims, would put pressure on the Sublime Porte to secure the region's stability and control.

Therefore, to the Ottomans, Hijaz was a relatively independent province where religious duty made a two-headed system of government a "necessary evil".[117] In the eyes of secularist Ottomans, the religious dimension of the state was a destabilising factor, and therefore Ottoman reformists, far from encouraging indigenous norms of participative rule, fought to limit the sharif's powers to the functions of controlling bedouin and pilgrimage affairs. However, Hussein's resistance to such restrictions created a process of personal legitimacy which was a paradox in that while

114 H. Saab, *The Arab Federalists of the Ottoman Empire* (Amsterdam, Djambatan, 1958), p. 310.

115 Ochsenwald, *Religion*, p. 190. Hijaz paid little in taxes other than import duties and provided no troops to the imperial armed forces. Instead, the Ottomans sent men, money and food to the area.

116 The Ottomans gave out a "dole" to the tribes, much of which was intercepted by the sharifs (Despatch of 25 October 1879, FO 195/1255).

117 The Ottomans considered the office of the sharif as a "necessary evil" (al-Amr, p. 117).

he mounted a challenge to Ottoman secular change, he did so by using the conservative rallying agenda of the Ottoman empire: pan-Islamism. Thus his challenge mirrored the internal divisions of the empire, for he was paid an Ottoman subsidy and considered part of the constitutional imperial machinery.

Sharif and vali: spiritual versus temporal authority in hijaz

One focus of Hussein's struggle against Ottoman rule in Hijaz was the political rivalry between the sharif-amir and the chief administrator or Ottoman vali. Their roles in the divided power structure were broadly that the vali traditionally controlled urban affairs while the amir oversaw tribal affairs.[118] During earlier Ottoman rule the amirs of Mecca, while being relatively Ottomanised in language and custom, left practical administration to the vali. Yet the vali's political disadvantage was that he was a political outsider in an unfamiliar setting, which perhaps partly explains the power of the sharifate during the mid-nineteenth century when Ottoman administration of Hijaz was very limited.[119] The power relationship between sharif and vali continued to fluctuate after the Crimean war, since inefficient provincial administration hindered the Sublime Porte's attempts to curb the governor's authority, and centralising reforms proved largely ineffective due to the constant, disruptive, changing of valis.[120] Hussein was undoubtedly familiar with this disruptive pattern of appointment, and certainly put such knowledge to crucial political use in combating Ottoman control over his hegemony.

The sharif–vali relationship was recognised at this time as a fluctuating power struggle, where the sharif's temporal authority varied according to the strength of the Ottoman power "protecting" him. The more "protection" the vali offered, the weaker the sharif became, and when the vali proved weak, the sharif assumed the real power[121] and

118 Baker, *King Husain*, p. 21.

119 Hogarth, *Hedjaz*, p. 111 and T. Marston, *Britain's Imperial Role in the Red Sea Area from 1800–1878* (Hamden, Conn., Shoe String Press, 1961), p. 140 (hereinafter cited as Marston).

120 J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East* (2 vols., Princeton, Princeton University Press), 1956, pp. 104, 137 and Davison, pp. 136–8.

121 See Admiralty, *Geographical Handbook*, vol.I, pp. 34f.

obliged the officers of occupation to treat him with real caution: "The Turkish governors of the Hijaz had no easy task. An energetic Shereef would always be on the alert to reduce the Governor's authority to the smallest measure . . . Co-operation between the two authorities for the maintenance of peace was not dreamed of".[122] While two well-matched men would provide a balance of power, "a weak Sharif would presumably allow a corrupt Vali a free hand, and vice-versa."[123] Consequently, each player attempted to acquire power by weakening that of his counterpart.

An evaluation of the respective political advantages of Hussein and his valis reveals the decisive factors in their contest for control, for Hussein exploited resources of power which gave him a decisive victory. The vali's advantage was his judicial authority in the towns, and therefore he threatened Hussein's religious control of the Holy Cities: he directly supervised the Qaim Maqams,[124] the Mudirs and even the Muhafiz of Medina until 1910. The firman for Hussein's appointment as sharif restricted his (legal) powers to the supervision of the pilgrimage, and to providing an efficient local administration in cooperation with the vali. Therefore, although Hussein held the title of "Highness", the Ottomans acknowledged him only as the chief executive officer in Mecca, who must admit their governors, sub-governors and other officials in Mecca and Taif.[125]

Hussein needed to undermine the vali's position as pre-eminent urban authority, supreme secular governor of the province and its urban administration. However, his initial strategy was to cooperate with the vali in administering Mecca, standing by him in 1909 when Ottoman troops held a protest in the Grand Mosque over their failure to receive

122 al-Amr, p. 117.

123 De Gaury, *Rulers*, p. 261.

124 Governors of regions smaller than vilayets.

125 See Admiralty, *Geographical Handbook*, pp. 34f. Hijaz had an Ottoman governor-general at the Ottoman government headquarters in Taif, and also a Qaim Maqam. Higher officials such as Muhafiz, Qaim Maqams, and Qadis were appointed from Constantinople. The vali of Hijaz (e.g. Ferik Gelib Pasha, officiating when World War I broke out) was not as senior as the governor-general, but was the executive officer. The Qaim Maqam was the sultan's official representative in Jeddah, and was inferior to the vali, who reported to the governor-general; yet one British consul refers to the Qaim Maqam as the "sherif's agent" in 1897 (Despatch of 18 May 1897, FO 195/1897).

discharge papers, and he was as a consequence honoured with a Durbar.[126] Having consolidated his internal position, Hussein then began openly to oppose aspects of Ottoman control, countering local improvements, apparently, on the grounds that the CUP had initiated them:

> A municipality was set up in Mecca last September [1909] for the first time. It is the work of the Mecca "Committee of Union and Progress" . . . and is opposed by the Grand Shereef . . . The long-established Jeddah municipality has never been able to levy such a cleaning and lighting tax.[127]

One of Hussein's advantages over the vali was that he was not so often required to refer to the central Constantinople government for decisions, but possessed considerable political initiative.[128] Also Hussein had greater powers of appointment than the vali, who could appoint only minor officials.[129] Consequently Hussein could appoint allies within the administration who would strengthen his power base. Furthermore, when the CUP initiated a democratic electoral system, Hussein managed to infiltrate it because his two sons were elected to parliaments;[130] two Hijazi representatives of the Arab Liberal Party defeated the CUP candidates. Therefore, since Hussein could muster local support, or at least exploit local opposition to Ottoman dominance, CUP power in Jeddah waned, and its clubhouses in both Mecca and Jeddah closed in 1912 "through indifference and partly for fear of the Grand Shereef, who had also deterred the Arabs from becoming members".[131] It is evident that, in order to wrest administrative power from the vali, Hussein was increasing his control over local politics, aided by popular apathy toward the CUP democratic process which was not an accepted

126 The Durbar (a reception) was held on 23 December 1909, as cited on p. 162 of *Pilgrimage Report*, FO 195/2350.

127 See Despatch No. 24, Jeddah, 7 June 1910, FO 371/1011.

128 See Despatch No. 39 of 25 August 1908, Jeddah to Constantinople, FO 195/2286. Hussein's relative independence was formalised via the *firman* of his appointment.

129 al-Amr, p. 75.

130 In 1911 Hussein allowed Abdallah to stand for election to the parliament created under the new constitution of 1908. In 1912 Abdallah and Faisal were elected for Mecca and Jeddah respectively (Baker, *King Husain*, p. 41).

131 See Despatch of 7 March 1912, FO 424/231.

social norm. In particular he interfered in small administrative details: one ploy was to divert the customary submission of complaints to the vali to his own courts,[132] thus undermining the consistency of the Ottoman imperial structure. Increasingly, foreign consuls were referred to the sharifian court for matters which previously the vali had settled: in 1909 Hussein officiated as governor-general in settling an important estate claim. By 1912 Hussein was aiming at "the suppression of the civil court in Jeddah . . .",[133] as it had been suppressed two or three months earlier in Mecca.

The vali's popularity diminished further because he needed to institute levies specifically to fund his administrative retinue, which undermined his social popularity. Hussein, on the other hand, received a large direct subsidy from Constantinople, and his popularity was boosted because he collected dues only in Mecca, and then chiefly a camel tax, aimed at pilgrims, not locals. He took a large share of the port dues[134] and remittances from the capital which the Ottomans collected, benefiting from these levies without being popularly perceived as imposing them.

After several years, Hussein's political technique became more aggressive, weakening the Ottoman empire's influence by forcing the successive removal of valis,[135] for instance Farid Pasha who, in 1911, disagreed with Hussein's method of controlling the bedouin. Hussein's method was to lodge continual complaints about valis, a strategy of "filibustering for dismissal". Operating in the divided power structure which he understood well, Hussein used the common tactical precedent of disruption. Furthermore, his years of experience in the political system of the Ottoman capital were invaluable since he knew how to press the Ottomans and constantly petitioned the sultan, with the help of his

132 Monaghan to Lowther, Despatch No. 15, regarding court cases, Jeddah, 5 April 1909, FO 195/2320.

133 See British consul, Shipley, to Sir G. Lowther, Despatch No. 29, 18 June 1912, FO 424/232.

134 Hussein's share of port dues is described in FO 195/2360. Several attempts were made by British agents over the years to determine the sharif's derivation of revenue both directly from the Ottomans as an allowance, and through taxes and extortion of pilgrims. For instance in 1908 he received an allowance of the equivalent of £12,000 (Despatch No. 66 of 2 December 1908, FO 195/2386).

135 Almost immediately on his arrival in December 1908 a disagreement arose between Hussein and Kazem Pasha, and the vali applied for a transfer (*Haj Report of 1908-9* in FO 195/2320).

prominent allies in Constantinople.[136] His constant complaints about the vali's corruption appealed to the sultan's conservative supporters, who were also combating the Young Turks; in this way his manipulation of political divisions enabled Hussein to extend his power into the imperial capital. Hussein lobbied for the removal of the valis so frequently that he reduced the political credibility of the vali's role: "between 1908 and 1916 there were six or seven Valis, none of whom had the personal authority to best the Amir."[137] As the British consul commented in 1912, "the grand Shereef . . . has much increased his power since 3 years ago".[138] However, reformists within the central Ottoman government swiftly retaliated, planning new constitutional restrictions on the role of sharif–amir.

Hussein's resistance to Ottoman reforms

The proposed Ottoman constitutional changes of 1913 posed a serious threat to Hussein's developing power and to Hijazi autonomy. While the valis whom Hussein had helped to oust until then were "nonentities with the exception of General Fuad Pasha",[139] the new vali, Vehib Bey, was formidable and, with CUP support from Constantinople, determined to implement a new administrative system.[140] Hitherto the CUP had aimed for greater centralisation, to remove power from the corruption-prone network of valis; but then, in a complete policy reversal, it aimed to decentralise power. In the short term this would reconcile provincial autonomy with the broader authority of the central government through the vali and the minister of the interior. However, from Hussein's viewpoint, this would greatly increase the powers of the vali over the sharif. Heading a locally elected council, a quasi-autonomous administration, the vali,

136 Nasif, Vol. 1, pp. 8f; Ahmad al-Sibai', *Tarikh Makka*, 4th edn (2 vols., Mecca, Nadi Mecca al-Thaqafi, 1979), Vol. 2, p. 186 (hereinafter cited as al-Sibai').

137 Sulayman Musa, *al-Haraka al-arabiyya* (Beirut, Dar al-Nahar, 1970), p. 99 (hereinafter cited as Musa, *al-Haraka*).

138 See Despatch No. 12, 7 March 1912, FO 424/231.

139 The British consul evaluated Hussein in March 1912 (Despatch No. 12, FO 424/231).

140 Marston, p. 140.

> was to be the chief executive authority in matters of finance and other important matters outside everyday administration. He was dependent on the decisions of the General Council. Members [of the Council] were to be elected. Judges, government officials, councillors to be paid, and elected initially by a joint electoral college composed of secondary electors.[141]

Such changes naturally threatened Hussein's traditional authority, for the Ottomans also intended that the elected officials would favour progressive reform rather than traditional Arab norms of rule. While decentralisation was the short-term aim, once the government representatives were elected, nothing would prevent them from reintroducing the agenda of centralisation; thus, in the long term such reorganisation sought to limit the autonomy of Hussein and the Hijaz. Astutely, Hussein defeated such reforms indirectly rather than directly, by preventing another Ottoman plan: the extension of the Hijaz railway to Mecca.

Hussein's strategy here was to mobilise his society in a powerful expression of dissent against the railway and thus irrevocably establish his authority. The capacity for military mobilisation of the tribes which he had now established proved invaluable, for the CUP had been able to depose the previous sharif because he lacked an indigenous coercive arm. Usually it was the vali, a high-ranking Ottoman officer, who possessed a greater, modern military capacity than the sharif, controlling as he did the Ottoman garrisons.[142] However, by 1913, Hussein could rally a large bedouin force in Hijaz and Asir, and the guerrilla tactics of the tribes were difficult for the Ottomans to combat by using conventional, organised military units.

The Ottoman plan to extend the Hijaz railway was of keen political and military significance.[143] The railway extension to Medina had almost

141 al-Amr, p. 116.

142 For example the Jeddah consul noted in 1912 that the sharif referred bedouin attacks to the Ottoman authorities, and in a series of attacks against Jeddah, it was the Ottoman firepower that repelled the Jeddah attacks; for instance, "the greater part of the firing was on the Turkish side, the soldiers continuing to let off their rifles long after the Bedouins had ceased." Acting Consul Abdurrahman to Sir G. Lowther, 14 June 1912, and Consul Shipley to Lowther, 18 June 1912, FO 371/1445.

143 Sa'id, *Asrar al-thawra al-'arabiyya al-kubra* (Cairo, Dar al-Katib al-'Arabi, 1934), pp. 103–5; hereinafter cited as Sa'id, *al-Thawra*; and Gharaiba, p. 324.

reached that city by February 1908, and it was planned at that time to extend it to Mecca via Rabigh and Jeddah. When the railway reached Medina it directly reduced Hussein's authority, as this allowed greater Turkish troop mobility and also undermined Hussein's authority among the bedouins who had looked to him to protect their economic livelihood. The city became a separate administrative unit directly under the Ottoman ministry of the interior, and Hussein's delegate there possessed little power. A further extension of the railway would similarly transform the Meccan power system. By presenting the extension of the railway as a threat to the indigenous autonomy of the tribes and to his authority, Hussein could exploit the threat to his, and the tribes' mutual interests to strengthen his forces. In addition to this strategy, historical precedent showed that Ottoman reforms had traditionally been uncertainly applied in Hijaz; thus the mass social agitation which occurred in response to such issues functioned not to counter specific changes, but as the society's ritual means of reaffirming its essential power, to protect its priority interests.

Until that time sabotage by the tribes had halted railway work,[144] and harassment increased, particularly from the Masruh tribe, which caused the Sublime Porte to dispatch a special investigator.[145] The British consul had viewed the "acutely unsafe state" of Hijaz as resulting from the ambiguous attitude of the previous vali, Ahmed Ratib Pasha, who was "even suspected . . . of keeping up the disturbances for the purpose of hindering the construction of the Hedjaz railway."[146]

The new vali, Vehib Bey, received strict instructions to ensure progress on the railway and put pressure on Hussein to cooperate. With this, Hussein's interests became even more firmly united with his society's, since an increased Ottoman military mobility and security presence within the province as a result of the railway would render the bedouin's policing of routes obsolete and destroy the bedouin economy. The security of routes was a fundamental responsibility shared between sharif and bedouin; Hussein exploited this and stressed to the bedouin that "the

144 Despite constant harassment the railway was officially opened on 1 September 1908, but although it reached Medina it had not reached Mecca even by 1914.

145 This official died before he could return to Constantinople. He was poised to recommend against the vali and Hussein (FO 195/2286).

146 See Despatch No. 1, 20 January 1909, FO 195/2320.

ability to rush troops from one part of the Hijaz to another would mean that the Turks no longer needed to buy peace from the bedu with gold." Hussein also exploited the fears of the urban merchants, who believed that increased Ottoman control would mean the enforcement of conscription and, most importantly, imposition of new taxes in Mecca and Medina, as well as the loss of mercantile trade in Jeddah.[147]

In addition to the railway's economic threat to Hijazi groups, it also, most importantly, threatened their fighting strength, for the Ottoman's new ability to transport troops swiftly would challenge the coercive capacity which had traditionally powered Hijazi tribal society. Vehib Bey had already stated in public that "force was the only way to deal with the Arab movement".[148] As a result, the interests of society and leader now completely united against this threat, which was also a threat to Hussein's function as arbitrator over the tribal coercive system. His position of amir, the tribal intermediary[149] who played Arabs' advocate against the Turkish government, would become obsolete. Hussein channelled this unprecedented social consensus into mobilisation to destabilise Ottoman rule, arguing to the bedouin that,

> the only hope was for the Emir to fight their battles; after all, he had driven away every Vali so far. If the law of the Vilayets were applied, Hussein explained that 'there would be no effective Emir and they would have to fight Turkish infantry and artillery directly to protect their livelihood.' With this explanation Hussein was confident to have the full support of the bedu.[150]

Therefore, to sustain its own coercive and economic systems, the society asserted its power to ensure that the railway was not finished: Mecca's citizens protested in the streets, and bedouin attacked Ottoman

147 Hussein probably realised that Jeddah town would "lose from the railway" as the pilgrims would merely "pass through without stopping and . . . the import of wheat and barley by sea" would be greatly diminished (Despatch of 3 February 1908, FO 195/2286).

148 C. Ernest Dawn, "The amir of Mecca Husayn ibn Ali and the origin of the Arab revolt", Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society (1960), Vol. 104, pp. 11–34; hereinafter cited as Dawn, "The amir of Mecca".

149 Wahbah, *Arabian Days*, p. 67.

150 Baker, *King Husain*, p. 43.

troops travelling to Jeddah. This agitation crippled the Ottoman authorities for while it stimulated international concern over the security of the pilgrimage, it was also hard to quell because its instigator was the sharif of Mecca. The consequent dislocation of trade and communications so weakened the position of the vali that he was forced to repudiate the new measures.[151]

The effective cohesive nature of this uprising contrasts tellingly with the resistance orchestrated later during the Arab revolt. In this earlier instance the indigenous solidarity was spontaneous, not encouraged or directed by external assistance or payment for military services. It was an immediate societal reaction to a critical danger, and as such was the strongest and most natural expression of indigenous social cohesion, via coercion, of any period in this case study. However, although Hussein here successfully demonstrated that his military power was in the ascendant, he still did not possess sufficient military resources to effect an all-out *coup* against the Ottoman empire. He still lacked sufficient independent power, or the positive ideological agenda, to orchestrate a *levée en masse.* Although he still had the potential to invoke jihad, the fact that he would require outside military assistance for any full revolt boded ill for the future of his leadership.

The pressure exerted by the CUP through the issues of the Hijaz railway and constitutional change, rather than destroying Hussein's traditional tribal authority, enhanced his ability to effect social cohesion and destroy the Ottoman agenda. This shows the effectiveness of the survival strategies which resisting groups commonly employ to prevent powerful actors (in this case the Ottomans) from using the strength of their state structure to introduce elements of control. The grand imperial vizier was forced to agree to Hussein's demand for the abandonment of extensions to the railway, conscription and the local implementation of the proposed vilayet laws.[152] By March 1914 the Sublime Porte had virtually repudiated the application of the law of provincial administration.[153]

The central government's abandonment of these policies was only a temporary ploy to placate Hijazi popular opinion and induce Hussein to withdraw his opposition, and thus by 1914 the vali and the CUP in

151 Gharaiba, p. 326 and Despatches of 10 and 17 March 1914 in L/P&S/11/76.
152 *Ibid.* and Gharaiba, p. 326.
153 Sir Mark Cheetham, Cairo to foreign secretary, 12 March 1914, FO 141/460.

Constantinople revived plans to finish the railway. Tal'at Pasha, the CUP leader and minister of the interior, informed Hussein that he would be deposed if he continued his opposition, while if he supported the railway he would benefit. He would be guaranteed the amirate for life and thereafter by heredity for his family branch. He would receive financial grants enabling him to attract tribal loyalty, would control one-third of all railway revenues, and would become commander of the force which ensured the project's completion.[154]

Hussein became aware of the vali's contingency plans for removing him if he continued to oppose increased Ottoman control.[155] This raises the question of whether Hussein did actually succeed in consolidating power at all during this period, for his success in achieving social cohesion only stimulated more intense Ottoman opposition, which threatened to remove him from office. A relatively new leader, he was caught between the sultan's reluctance and the CUP's sufferance; his methods of increasing control perhaps destabilised his power as much as they enhanced it, for demonstrating that the CUP had lost control only increased its motivation to tame him with incentives or depose him. The Ottoman empire's shaky occupation of Hijaz was an example of an empire stretched beyond its means – yet it still possessed immense military resources: for instance in 1908 the Sublime Porte promised the official in charge of railway construction, following a bedouin attack, "a force of 30,000 men, including cavalry and infantry and miners to [both] push on the line and punish the bedouin."[156] And evidently, the more successful Hussein's opposition became, the more he was a target for crushing retaliation. If a major war was to break out between the Great Powers, the Hijaz railway might become a strategic commodity, and Hussein might then become completely expendable to the Ottomans. When World War I began the Ottomans were forced to put their political house in order and fully mobilise military forces, so that the demise of Hussein's leadership became only a matter of time.

154 Musa, *al-Haraka,* p. 79; William Ochsenwald, *The Hejaz Rail Road* (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1980), pp. 131–2; and Dawn, "The amir of Mecca", pp. 17–19.

155 Sir Mark Cheetham, British agency, Cairo to foreign secretary, 12 March 1914, FO 141/460.

156 See Despatch of 3 February 1908, FO 195/2286.

However, Hussein's religious authority as sharif offered him a temporary lifeline. Religious status had previously preserved him through captivity and was one reason why the Ottomans had backed down over reforming the Hijaz. With the approach of war they might need him to declare a jihad against their enemy,[157] for jihad, his ultimate political weapon, might overcome the recent Hijazi resistance to Ottoman attempts at conscription. Thus to the Ottomans, the only useful resource which Hussein now offered was his ability to enlist social support instantly by means of his religious authority; his social groups could be drawn into the Ottoman military campaigns on a religious pretext, without requiring motivation by a secular ideological agenda.

Hussein's first period of rule demonstrates that his authority was fundamentally affected by the way in which his form of government related to the concept of his authority held by the social groups which competed for power in Hijaz. He possessed a realistic concept of authority which affected his technique of governance and which related to his understanding of his own limits and powers, as tacitly agreed upon by tribes and townspeople who were jostling for indigenous power. Hussein successfully developed a harmonious relationship with these groups based on mutual interests rather than prescriptive ideological agendas. This tacit alliance between Hussein and his society clashed with the Ottoman agenda for controlling Hijaz, but the CUP tolerated it, for they lost ground when opposing it. By reinforcing the norms of his traditional religious and political authority, Hussein achieved his most consistent and stable source of power, because his distinct rules of governance, with their rewards and sanctions, related to socially accepted traditions which legitimised his control. Thus his society believed that he deserved ascendancy and helped to sustain it. His power as sharif was an ambiguous mix of symbolic and executive religious and political capacity; as amir, he was linked to the traditional political structure, its tribal and urban commercial structures and its judicio-religious systems. In reconciling these two forms of authority, religious and tribal–judicial, which coexisted within his rule, he demonstrated a flexible political consciousness. Thus he reinforced his initial authority, based on the traditional right of blood descent, over his urban and tribal groups. Also, his role as adjudicator and successful

157 Jalal Yahya, *al-'Alam al-'arabi al-hadith* (Cairo, Dar al-Ma'arif, 1966), p. 512.

imposition of taxation tributes was an important economic ritual, acknowledging his authority. His imposition of taxation was also an effective traditional method of extending his own governing infrastructure.

Many of Hussein's successes were achieved by alternating the use of the separate coercive resources at his disposal. With Ottoman assistance, he subdued the bedouin and secured the trade and pilgrimage routes, thus enhancing his prestige as Guardian of the *Haramain* (the mosques at Mecca and Medina). With Ottoman resources he tested the strength of his close rivals and expanded his influence to create a power base sufficient to counter the CUP's efforts to undermine his developing authority. (His social popularity after the Asir victory helped him to force local CUP groups out of action.) With his tribes he shared economic interests, as well as an opposition to conscription, constitutional government and the spread of Turkish military rail communications in Hijaz. These shared interests established a firm social foundation for his rule and created resistant coalitions which undermined the modernising policy interventions of the foreign occupying power.

Hussein also successfully subverted the Ottoman state infrastructure; his tactic was to move fluidly between two systems of control, Ottoman and Hijazi, keeping open each political system as a viable power structure. The sultan's power, although waning, still sustained Hussein because Hussein's contacts among the Constantinople traditionalists helped him to dismiss his rivals, the valis. In this way he used the Ottoman system to advantage while at the same time his constant changes of its administrative officials undermined CUP power. He exploited the Ottoman forces against rivals, but successfully resisted the Hijaz railway which was a project to increase Ottoman control and a symbol of progress opposed by traditionalism. Further, the new Ottoman electoral system brought Hussein's sons into nominal office while he simultaneously destabilised modernising constitutionalism by closing CUP clubhouses. His alternating support and betrayal of the Ottomans went unpunished mainly because of his unassailable religious authority; he gradually transferred the secular aspect of his authority away from Ottoman officialdom, making himself leader of a coalition of social groups resisting the CUP agendas.

The Young Turks and their Western model of state, with its modernising, ostensibly democratic, reform programme, posed an ideological challenge to Hussein's traditional rule and Hijazi norms, but he withstood this challenge by affirming his traditional authority. Nationalism did not

appeal to Hijazi social groups, which based their political activity on interests, and Hussein was able to direct such tribal and urban *maslaha* into dissent against threatening Ottoman policy interventions. Since his variables of religious, political and economic support were strongly associated, his authority was extremely solid during this period. His powers reached their peak, and his limited military successes over his chief rivals, Ibn Saud and al-Idrisi, made him temporarily *primus inter pares.*

PART II

AUTHORITY AND FOREIGN INTERVENTION IN ARABIA DURING WORLD WAR I

3

The effect of the Arab revolt on the authority of Sharif Hussein

This chapter evaluates aspects of Hussein's authority during the period of the Arab revolt and considers how his leadership moved from being a traditional and religious authority to another form of political authority: a nationalist leadership. The analysis of the changes in Hussein's concept of his leadership is a crucial part of this study since a leader's effective strategy derives from exploitation of his own perceptions of his authority.

Hussein's early rule (1908–14) was successful because his conception of his government matched that of his society. His responses to wartime political events, however, suggest that he may not have been fully aware that his authority derived from the satisfaction of social interests. Chapter 2 demonstrated that Hussein's form of authority had two redeeming aspects which would sustain his rule under pressure: firstly, his domestic leverage through the relative social cohesion which he had achieved by satisfying social interests and imposing coercive control by using both tribal confederations and Ottoman forces; and secondly, his international influence as a religious figure. Previously, he had expanded his power through a fluid orchestration of his sources of authority – religious, tribal and coercive. His next challenge was to sustain the interaction of these variables in the context of new political dynamics. His strategies needed to be adequate to respond effectively to rapidly evolving political circumstances such as those of the Arab revolt, the Sykes–Picot Agreement which will be discussed at length later in the chapter and the Balfour Declaration. His achievement during the Great War was to depend on his successful use of his authority variables. These were in turn affected by models of secular nationalism, which actually posed an implicit challenge to Hussein's traditional rule. It is remarkable, and ironic,[1] that a traditional

1 Ochsenwald points out the irony of the fact that an Arab nationalist revolt took place in Hijaz where the society possessed little intrinsic nationalist sentiment (Ochsenwald, "Ironic origins", pp. 189–203).

Arabian leader firmly opposed to modern reform was transformed into a nationalist figurehead. Clearly, he seized an opportunity for power which was offered to him by the new political agenda of nationalism. However, the disadvantage of adopting this agenda was that he might once again become a political buffer between larger political forces, as he did when he interposed himself between the Ottoman sultan and the CUP.

Hussein's religious authority became of paramount international significance. For example, Turkish wartime propaganda stressed that his revolt, which was supported by Britain, attacked the Islamic world community.[2] To rebuff this charge, he needed to make the most of his religious role as sharif, for example by invoking jihad.

Simultaneously, the escalation of military activity in Hijaz presented new challenges to Hussein's management of his coercive capacity. His tactical importance to Britain, because of his influence over townspeople and tribes as sharif and amir of Mecca, made him "ideally situated to exploit and co-ordinate the two distinct movements".[3] He needed to orchestrate tribal interests for military effect, while exploiting British short-term military support. Previously, he had used two distinct coercive arms, Ottoman and indigenous, to control each other, but now he was required to manage the larger military arm generated for his revolt by the immediate circumstances of World War I. He also needed to administer his economic policy effectively, given the wartime decline in pilgrimage revenues and his new source of foreign assistance from Britain. Such administrative problems risked revealing weaknesses in his authority and stimulating dissent among both tribes and townspeople, thereby accelerating the decline of social support. This was especially so since Hussein had not replaced the Ottoman administrative system with a new firm controlling structure of government to perpetuate the social cohesion he had generated.

The withdrawal of Ottoman support, which had provided practical inducements for his society to endorse him, forced him to seek another foreign alliance. The necessity of such an alliance showed that he was not yet ready for independent rule. The revolt may have been useful to his

2 "Without its Islamic religion and the throne of its Ottoman caliph, an Islamic community [*milla*] dies" (*Al-Qibla*, No. 10 (17 Dhu al-Qa'ada 1334)).

3 Troeller, p. 78.

rule since it offered him a breathing-space and provided him with the military strength he needed to develop a better administration. Would he use this opportunity to improve his administrative control, however? In forsaking his traditional Ottoman support base for a British alliance, he risked damaging aspects of his authority. Firstly, Britain was a Christian power and the affiliation might taint his religious legitimacy. Secondly, Britain's other strategies for the disposal of Middle Eastern territories to suit its more important allies might compromise the pan-nationalist agenda that Hussein was being encouraged to adopt and so undermine his political credibility. Moreover, given that his authority was being criticised by the CUP because of his opposition to their modernising plans in Hijaz, his protracted negotiations over instigating a revolt are curious. In fact, his wartime alliance with Britain encountered many setbacks and misunderstandings.

Hussein had more idealistic expectations of Britain than of the Ottomans. His belief that Britain supported the ideological model of pan-Arab leadership for the Hashemites undoubtedly distorted his estimation of his potential for power, a perception inspired partly by the support of some Syrian groups. There is still controversy over the extent of British guarantees regarding the scope of Hussein's postwar leadership, as evinced in the Hussein–McMahon correspondence.[4] It is therefore important to evaluate these guarantees, together with Hussein's ability to assess them.

Foreign relations and British intervention

During World War I Hussein's dissociation from the Ottoman empire and his assumption of an alliance with Britain were pivotal to the future of his leadership. When Hussein first approached Britain with the proposal for an alliance, he did so from a position of relative political weakness, at

4 The Hussein–McMahon correspondence is covered in a variety of sources, such as Elie Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth: The McMahon–Husayn Correspondence and its Interpretations 1914–1939* (London, Cambridge University Press, 1976); hereinafter cited as Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth*. It is generally conceded that, on the British side, McMahon somewhat exceeded his brief, while on the Arab side spiralling hopes were attached to the series of promises, and overall there were honest difficulties and mistakes made with translation. Nearly three decades later, in 1964, the FO attempted to analyse the inconsistencies of the correspondence, finding it necessary to revise parts of the 1939 translation (FO 371/175635).

a time when his position was under threat from his current suzerain, the Ottoman empire. As outlined in Chapter 1, Hussein's role as a political buffer between modernising and traditional forces of Ottoman government made his authority the target of the CUP:[5] for instance in 1910 the Medina Muhafiz announced that Hussein's deputy was no longer needed there because of new telegraph and rail links with Istanbul.[6] At first Hussein reacted cautiously to the CUP attack on his power, still attempting to secure diplomatic advantages from the Ottomans after the outbreak of World War I. There is no evidence that he enjoyed popular support. The people of Mecca blocked the Jeddah and Medina roads, stopping pilgrim and commercial travel, on hearing that Hussein's powers were to be curtailed by a new vali: "this displeased them and their tribal enthusiasm rose to a high pitch".[7] When complaints regarding this unrest were wired from Constantinople, Hussein responded that,

> the new Governor left no authority or influence for him in the country and he was incapable of doing anything unless his authority was restored to him. The Turkish authorities had no alternative but to restore his deprived authority.[8]

The Turks were forced to use a *firman* to restore order, which made Hussein the chief governor above the vali: "a remarkable success . . . as had never been attained by the former Sherifs."[9] Accordingly, Britain, presumed that "The Arabs [were] very fond of the Sharif and [would] be ready to assist him and take his side against the Turks."[10] Such popular support, based on social interests, influenced Hussein to instigate the revolt:

> He has already gained the natives of Hejaz and a part of the Asir tribes. Messenger has heard secretly that the Arab officers of the

5 Wilson, "The Hashemites", p. 210.
6 Abdallah, *Mudhakkirat*, pp. 102–3.
7 *Ibid.*
8 See Secret Paper by Captain G. S. Symes, "The Sherif of Mecca", 19 July 1915, FO 371/2486. This report was actually authored by a Mecca informant, Mohammad ibn Aridf Oreifan, interviewed at Alexandria.
9 FO 371/2486.
10 See Despatch of 14 August 1915, FO 371/2486.

> Turkish forces in the Hejaz have sworn to the Sharif to be his support and to fight under his flag . . . Many Arab officers from the Turkish army at Yemen came to Hussein who paid them regularly and protected them.[11]

Despite this Hussein still maintained a dialogue with Constantinople.[12] After Ottoman requests for assistance, Hussein asked for the means to enlist volunteers, and received 50–60,000 Ottoman pounds.[13] However, the Ottomans refused certain demands, such as the pardoning of groups who were resisting the Ottomans in Syria and Iraq, and that the amirate remain hereditary in Hussein's family: "I am surprised that in the time of war you are expressing such a desire, that you want to occupy one of the most important positions in one of the most important districts of the Ottoman Empire."[14]

It seems that, while they were aware that Hussein's support was important, the Ottomans did not consider him a crucial enough ally to merit giving in to him completely. They knew that Hussein had no strong personal coercive arm; and perhaps thought it unlikely that he would risk his religious legitimacy by allying with a Christian power. His situation militated against his risking semi-autonomous rule for a rebellion which would have uncertain consequences for his dynastic authority.

However, as Hussein's authority was increasingly threatened by the CUP, the sultan's support was carefully qualified: "he had complete confidence in the Sherif . . . as long as the railway project was not opposed".[15] Despite such statements Hussein believed that the railway's completion would render the sharifate politically worthless, and thus reluctantly accepted that his rule in Hijaz might end:

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11 See Despatch of 19 August 1915, FO 371/2486.

12 While corresponding with Britain, he denied such overtures to the Ottomans, who, as late as 1917, considered reconciliation: "If the Arabs will admit they have been deceived there would be no difficulty in obtaining Turkish amnesty . . ." (high commissioner, Cairo, to foreign office, 24 December 1917, reporting proposals sent to Sharif Faisal and relayed by Hussein). Faisal replied that no talks would occur behind Britain's back. Even so, Jamal Pasha offered peace again in June 1918 (FO 141/430).

13 Nasif, p. 41.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Zeine N. Zeine, *The Struggle for Arab Independence: Western Diplomacy and the Rise and Fall of Faisal's Kingdom of Syria* (Beirut, Khayat's, 1960), p. 105; hereinafter cited as Zeine.

> the Grand Sherif may not think his position sufficiently menaced to make it worth his while to risk everything on open defiance of the Central Government. On the other hand, Constantinople may feel that his aggrandisement has gone too far.[16]

Such was the realistic British opinion after Hussein dispatched Abdallah in April 1914 to solicit British support for an uprising.[17] Louis Mallet (of the India Office) believed Hussein's approach to be merely a gesture, prompted by the appointment of a militarily-empowered vali, and by sharifian rivals, "bitterly hostile to the present Grand Sharif".[18] Hussein proceeded cautiously, assessing his strength. Sir Reginald Wingate commented, "[He] wishes to be assured of the complete downfall of the Turkish temporal power . . . and to ascertain the general trend of Moslem opinion outside the Turkish Empire in regard to his claims."[19] Abdallah, the "spur" of his father,[20] strongly urged alliance with Britain,[21] making repeated approaches to British authorities in Cairo, and requesting an agreement with Britain "similar to that existing between the Amir of Afghanistan and the Government of India, in order to maintain the status quo in the Arabian peninsula and to do away with . . . the danger of wanton Turkish aggression".[22] Finally the British sent a secret messenger to sound out Hussein's position if Britain were to declare war on the Ottomans,[23] after which officials concluded that if Hussein did not openly ally with Britain, at least he was unlikely to assist the Ottomans,[24] and that this neutrality would be of strategic advantage.

16 L/P&S/10/385, 1914.

17 Sir Ronald Storrs, *Orientations* (London, Nicholson and Watson, 1937), p. 122.

18 From a report by the director of intelligence: "Sherif Heidar is the greatest danger to Hussein . . . he had the sworn promise of the Government that he shall succeed Hussein" (Memorandum of *c.* 7 February 1916, L/P&S/10/525).

19 See Memo by Captain G. S. Symes, 19 July 1915, B.211, FO 371/2486.

20 T. E. Lawrence, "The Sherifs", *Arab Bulletin*, 32, 27 October 1916. For his son's specific roles in the revolt, see Wilson, "The Hashemites", pp. 214–15 and 217.

21 Wilson, "The Hashemites", p. 213.

22 Mark Cheetham, British agency, Cairo, to foreign secretary, 20 December, 1914, No. 204, L/P&S/10/523.

23 *Ibid.*, in October 1914.

24 See enclosure No. 1, in Sir L. Mallet to Sir Edward Grey, 18 March 1914, L/P&S/10/385.

Three factors influenced Hussein to initiate the revolt, the first being Britain's encouragement through the Hussein–McMahon correspondence, which resolved Hussein's doubts as to British support:[25] the specific commitments which Britain made in these exchanges were extremely important, and indeed determined Britain's later, qualified, postwar support for Hussein. The second factor was that increasing Ottoman suspicions, combined with a newly-appointed strong vali who posed a real threat to Hussein's authority, forced Hussein to declare his position before military reinforcements were sent to crush him; and thirdly, Hussein received overtures from the Arab nationalist groups asking him to lead a revolt.[26] These various external political dynamics greatly encouraged Hussein's independent desire for a revolt.

The Arab nationalist movement and Hussein's social support

One important effect of foreign intervention on Hussein's authority was that it altered his perception of the basis of his authority. Diverging from the attitudes of traditional leadership and Ottoman officialdom, he came to perceive his personal power in expanded terms, and adopted another ideological model: pan-Arab leadership and Arab nationalism.[27] Kedourie's definition of nationalism highlights the difference between European and Middle Eastern society he writes, "Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century . . . the doctrine holds that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained."[28] Such

25 In the Hussein–McMahon correspondence, eight letters sent over seven months, Britain recommended the political and religious leadership of Hussein for Arabs. For a full explanation of the correspondence see Kedourie, *In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth.*

26 Deedes, a British intelligence officer in Egypt, gave an overview of such Arab nationalist groups. See Zeine, pp. 135–7.

27 C. Ernest Dawn, "The origins of Arab nationalism". *The Origins of Arab Nationalism* ed. Rashid Khalidi *et al.* (New York, Columbia University Press), hereinafter cited as Dawn, "Origins of Arab nationalism". Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London, Faber and Faber, 1991), pp. 299–314.

28 Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism,* 4th edn (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1993), p. 1.

a description, which is accepted in Europe as a self-evident ideal, is intrinsically alien to certain Middle Eastern societies.

> Scholars such as George Antonius, C. Ernest Dawn, and Elie Kedourie have been intrigued by the strange parentage of the Arab revolt, but they have questioned neither the revolt's Arab nationalist identity nor its unique position in Arab history . . . As such it was certainly used to good purpose by its Hashemite leaders, who later came to rule Transjordan and Iraq. Nonetheless, one is tempted to question the assumed simple and straightforward relationship of the Arab revolt to the development of Arab nationalism.[29]

> Little nationalist sentiment existed in the multi-ethnic Hijaz, because of the strength of religious identity and interests among the people: "Secular nationalism was weak in Hejaz because the sort of people who were nationalists elsewhere were largely missing from this region (ex-Press writers, Army officers, and intellectuals)."[30]

Beyond the concept of the Islamic *umma*, Hijazis lacked a sense of belonging to a community capable of maintaining independent statehood, and of granting that community primary loyalty. The townspeople and the tribes backed the revolt because Hussein's interests coincided with theirs. These interests included assuring material needs for survival, particularly during the harsh world war, and hostility to foreign domination.

Indigenous hostility towards the Ottomans intensified at the start of World War I, because the society came under extreme economic pressure. The British wartime embargo on food supplies and pilgrim traffic made independence from the Ottomans a priority for the deprived Hijazis.[31] Britain's naval blockade of the Red Sea revealed that the Ottomans were prepared to sacrifice the Hijazi economy and people for their strategic purposes. As early as December 1914 there was "great distress at Jeddah" which was "largely due to discharge at Aden of food supplies". The British resident in Aden raised the question of the Holy Cities being (then) outside the war zone, "on the whole it seems politic not to starve this province. I therefore recommend tentative trade be resumed with Jeddah alone".[32] Despite the fact that some Turkish troops would

29 Wilson, "The Hashemites", p. 204.
30 Ochsenwald, "Ironic origins", pp. 189–203.
31 Rafi', p. 261.
32 Resident, Aden, to Government of India, 5 December 1914, FO 371/2147.

inevitably benefit from the move, the British recognised the propaganda value of easing a blockade and allowed supplies to go through. Nevertheless, famine spread in Mecca and the local authorities had no reserves to sustain the population, other than some wheat from Syria. Sixty thousand Ottoman ginehs were supposed to be distributed to each family, but the system was inefficient and only one-third of the money was distributed, although after the revolt Hussein distributed more of it.[33] Caught between economic destruction and independence under Hussein's supposed new nationalist agenda, the Hijazis seemed to support him. However, the concept of nationalism of the townspeople and pugnacious northern Hijaz tribes differed from that in Damascus: theirs was a "reactive nationalism" generated by the simple wish to evict the Ottomans; it was not a positive and coherently expressed ideological agenda, such as the goal of expanding the Islamic *umma* which later motivated Ibn Saud's Ikhwan to invade Hijaz.

The fact that no nationalist sentiment existed at grass-roots' level in Hijaz suggests that Hussein was unrealistic in initiating a bid for sustained autonomy based on an ideology without profound appeal to his society. Moreover, there were contemporary suspicions that his understanding of pan-Arabism was not visionary. As one observer remarked: "Arab unity means very little to King Hussein except as a means to his own personal aggrandisement."[34] It must also be stressed that the ideologies endorsed by the existing Arab nationalist groups did not necessarily promote what is understood as modern secular nationalism.[35] However, recent studies by Eliezer Tauber[36] suggest that Hussein's bases for the revolt were not as unrealistic as they appear. Rather, it seems that historical circumstances in Syria beyond his control decimated his nationalist support there, after the revolt had been declared.

The emphasis on religious legitimacy within Hussein's proclamations[37] and propaganda during the revolt suggest that nationalism was

33 L/P&S/10/388, fol. 236.

34 See report by D. G. Hogarth, *c.* 27 January 1918, L/P&S/10/389.

35 Early nationalists "set out to make Arab governments on the lines of Turkish governments under which they had lived hitherto, and which was the only government they knew" (Glubb, *Britain and the Arabs*, p. 111).

36 Eliezer Tauber, *The Arab Movements in World War I.* (London, Frank Cass, 1993); hereinafter cited as Tauber.

37 "Whereas in the McMahon correspondence Husayn frequently adopted the language of Arab nationalism . . . his proclamations of June 1916 were couched

not an ideology he felt at ease in expressing explicitly.[38] It is highly probable that a major reason why Hussein adopted the nationalist ideology was self-interest, encouraged by the nationalist groups in other Ottoman-dominated countries such as Syria and Iraq,[39] who saw that nationalist ideology was useful for "a dialogue with a European Power whose political frame of reference was ethnic nationalism".[40]

> with the appearance of a new protector, Britain, the Hashemites . . . could break with the empire and construct a new framework of support – an Arab state made up of territories outside the customary Hashemite Purview. The creation of this state would be legitimised by ideology of Arab nationalism.[41]

In November 1914 a clandestine correspondence began between Hussein and the Syrian nationalist associations who had engaged in unsatisfactory negotiations with British representatives in Egypt.[42] These groups were not initially anti-Ottoman,[43] but after repressive Ottoman measures

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in much more traditional style, grounding his revolt not on secular nationalist aspirations but on the irreligion of the Young Turks and the tribal loyalties of the people of the Hijaz." See M. E. Yapp, *The Making of the Modern Near East 1792–1923* (London, Longman, 1987), p. 285; hereinafter cited as Yapp.

38 In Hussein's wartime newspaper, *Al-Qibla*, "There were no definitions of Arabism because neither the amir of Mecca nor his editor, Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib, were comfortable with them . . . unity of language, so important to inter-war Arabists, was used to reinforce religious, not national solidarity" (*Al-Qibla*, No. 3 (22 Shuwwal 1334) and *Al-Qibla*, No. 53, (19 Rabi'-al Thani 1335), cited in William L. Cleveland, "The role of Islam as a political ideology in the First World War", *National and International Politics in the Middle East, Essays in Honour of Elie Kedourie*, ed. Edward Ingram (London, Frank Cass, 1986), p. 91; hereinafter cited as Cleveland.

39 In June 1913 the Arab conference in Paris discussed Arab rights within the Ottoman empire. Most of the participants, Syrians, favoured decentralisation (Vassiliev, p. 286).

40 Wilson, "The Hashemites", p. 214.

41 *Ibid.*

42 Tauber, pp. 57–9.

43 For instance, the Syrian nationalists passed a resolution on Arab independence when the Ottoman empire entered the war, noting that they were not necessarily hostile to the Sublime Porte, and even hoped to work alongside it. "The goal of the Arabs is independence in order to guard the existence of the Arab countries, and not out of hostility to the Turks. Therefore, if the Arab countries will stand up to the danger of European imperialism, the Society will

in Syria and Iraq, they became vehement in their goal for complete independence.[44]

Faisal went to Damascus to brief these nationalists on Britain's current, secret negotiations with Hussein,[45] whereupon the nationalist groups al-Fatat and al-'Ahd combined their efforts and offered Hussein their support. Its civilian wing had already paid allegiance to the sharif of Mecca as "Khalifa" and renounced allegiance to "Rashad" the sultan of Turkey: "We sent an officer to the Sherif of Mecca and he paid him allegiance on behalf of all the officers in our party".[46] The group was greatly encouraged to learn that Britain was backing Hussein and seemed to endorse the creation of an Arab empire under the Hashemites. Faisal was given a protocol defining "the conditions under which the societies would take part in a British-backed revolt, and . . . a pledge that their leaders would recognise the Grand Sherif as 'spokesman for the Arabs'". A liaison officer from the Syrian al-Fatat was thus dispatched to Mecca.[47] The two countries encouraging Hussein to revolt (Britain and the Syrians) considered each other as a military asset for an eventual uprising.

However, the premises on which the Arab nationalist groups were encouraging Hussein to revolt were flawed in several respects. Firstly, the military forces at their disposal were inadequate to sustain Hussein in the rule to which they were nominating him as negotiator with Britain of

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work alongside the Turks, together with all free Arabs to protect the Arab countries." See Ahmad Qadri, *Mudhakkirati 'an al-thawra al-'arabiyah al-kubra* (Damascus, 1956), p. 38. See also Antonius, p. 15.

44 In October 1915 Kamil al-Qassab, ostensibly in Mecca on pilgrimage, urged Hussein to revolt and described Syrian oppression under Ottoman rule, stressing that his society would settle only for complete independence (Tauber, pp. 57–9).

45 al-Sibai', p. 600.

46 See memoranda from army HQ, interview with Arab army officers, Cairo, 11 October 1915, L/P&S/10/523.

47 Tauber, pp. 60–1. "In 1915, a meeting was held with the participation of Yasin al Hashimi and several al-Fatat leaders, at which it was decided to prepare a general plan for a revolt against the Ottomans . . . Their goal was to reach a state of affairs in which they would be able to set up a temporary government in Syria. At the same time, though, they wanted the revolt to spread to the Arabian peninsula . . . Al Hashimi wanted Ibn Saud of Nejd to be this leader, but emissaries of al-Fatat who reached Ibn Saud . . . were politely turned down by him . . . the choice fell then on Sharif Husayn of Mecca." Tauber cites Cheetham to Grey, 26 October 1914, FO 371/2140; Cheetham to Grey, 28 October 1914, L/P&S/11/95; Arthur Henry to McMahon (Cairo) to FSI (Delhi), 9 February 1915.

the freedom of the Arab peoples in the name of all Arabs. Significantly, Ibn Saud had been approached before Hussein by the Syrian groups with an invitation to lead a revolt, but had declined because he doubted their capacity to effect a rebellion.[48] Secondly, Syrian groups did not have the consent of all Arabs to propose Hussein as leader of the revolt, and nor did Britain. No one at the time seemed agreed on pan-Arab goals. McMahon noted, "[the term 'independent sovereign state' has been interpreted in the generic sense because [the] idea of an Arabian unity under one ruler recognised as supreme by other Arab chiefs is as yet inconceivable to [the] Arab mind."[49] The lack of a general sanction for Hussein as a pan-Arab leader was evident when Allenby later took Syria and had difficulty in reconciling the various religious communities, some of whom rejected the Hashemite rule.[50] At this stage, none of the key figures, including Hussein, sufficiently considered or questioned, as the Ottoman war propaganda did, his practical ability to found a new governmental structure, his lack of a professional army and of heavy war industries.[51]

Fatat al-Arab and other such geographically distant movements were encouraging Hussein's ambition for power in an unrealistic direction, focusing his attention outside his own state and away from his natural, indigenous sources of authority. To some extent, Hussein came to regard the Syrian support as a substitute for indigenous tribal loyalty and embarked upon a political and military venture on a scale which was bound to stimulate formidable Ottoman opposition.

On the other hand, the coercive support which the nationalist groups offered was by no means insubstantial. Early in the world war Britain's officials in Cairo learned of a large secret nationalist section within the Ottoman army, reputedly comprising 90 per cent of its Arab officers, which aimed to create an Arab caliphate in Arabia, Syria and Iraq.[52] The large number of Arab nationalists in the Ottoman forces

48 Amin Sa'id, *Tarikh al-dawla al-saudiyya* (Beirut, Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1964), pp. 37–8.

49 McMahon to foreign secretary, 14 May 1915, FO 371/2486.

50 Elizabeth Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914–1956.* (London, Chatto and Windus, 1963), p. 47; hereinafter cited as Monroe.

51 *al-'Alam al-Islami,* No. 17, 24 August 1916, p. 22.

52 Yapp, p. 279.

certainly offered Hussein a base of military support to endorse his revolt and disproves any notion that the nationalists were impractical intellectuals.[53] In 1915, the Young Arab Party pressed Britain for support,[54] and it was the possibility that this group might similarly approach Germany which rekindled Britain's interest in instigating an uprising through Hussein.

As some British officials saw it, Hussein's task in transforming societal perceptions of his leadership towards nationalism was hindered by his previous function as an Ottoman official, for he was popularly perceived, to an extent, as an Ottoman loyalist: "he would have to live down a past in which, while working for his own aggrandisement, he has posed very definitely as the representative of the Central Government".[55] Significantly, later, during the revolt, Ottoman propaganda attacked him not as a nationalist (because this would have strengthened support from nationalist groups outside his hegemony) but for blasphemous rebellion against the Islamic empire which had endorsed his rule.[56]

For the brief period of the revolt, two indigenous political structures, tribal and religious, encountered nationalist ideology. Social participation in expelling the Turks appeared to demonstrate that nationalist belief was a new, socially-grounded political movement. One supporter concluded in 1915 that Hussein's prestige was paramount because of Syrian nationalist backing, the support of Asir tribes and because he aided Turkish army

53 Tauber, p. 61.

54 A representative of the Young Arab Party was interviewed in detail in Cairo in October 1915 and outlined the group's support for Hussein. McMahon wired eagerly to the foreign office for guidance on 18 October that the "Arab Party are at parting of ways . . . unless we can give them immediate assurance . . . they will throw themselves into the hands of Germany" (McMahon to Cairo, 18 October 1915, L/P&S/10/523).

55 See Enclosure No. 1 in Sir L. Mallet to Sir Edward Grey, 18 March 1914, L/P&S/10/385. For instance, in 1911, Hussein intervened in Asir as an Ottoman agent, although advised that this would antagonise Arab opinion (Abdallah, *Mudhakkirat*, pp. 78–9).

56 Ottoman papers did not raise subjects associated with nationalist movements, such as the separation of Arabs as Arabs; nor was Hussein criticised as an Arab. Rather, the Ottomans and Hussein accused each other of the betrayal of Islam and its Caliph (*al-'Alam al-Islami*, No. 17, 24 August 1916, p. 9; *al-'Alam al-Islami*, No. 23, 5 October 1916, 5; and *Al-Sharq*, No. 688 10 July 1918, cited in Cleveland, p. 93).

deserters.[57] Hussein commented to McMahon with regard to his society's political agenda, "You need not be anxious about the ideas of the people here, because they are closely bound to your Government by a community of interests."[58] However, the revolt gave a false indication of the ideological agendas of both Britain and Hussein: "consensus on pretext". Arab nationalism was an ideology of convenience for Britain. From the early nineteenth century, Britain's foreign policy in Arabia, in its support either of Arab independence or of Ottoman dominance, had always been dictated by its strategic interests, the security of the route to India or its need to keep the Ottoman military forces tied up in Arabia. Similarly, Hussein's society was motivated by its own specific interests: its traditional disdain of central authority and a simple rejection of Ottoman dominance which impinged on freedom and customary norms.[59]

From the start, Hussein failed to recognise that British and indigenous support for him were based mainly on this "consensus on pretext", although contemporary Ottoman journals charged him with self-deception, given Britain's tradition of imperial suppression.[60] He did not recognise that the larger scope of the nationalist authority for which the groups abroad were promoting him was not backed by a broad, sound local social consent. Sir Wyndham Deedes expressed doubts in 1916 about Hussein's concept of nationalism as "a spiritual and temporal Arab Kingdom" – a form of rule which was lacking in broad social appeal:

> I think it is the view . . . of many of the Arabs and all of the Turks themselves, this idea is not a practical one . . . it will never be possible to get all the Arabs of Syria, Iraq, Yemen and the others to acknowledge one temporal chief, even if they acknowledge one spiritual chief.[61]

Models of state adopted by rulers may offer different *rates* of success, some of which are profitable in the short term. The new, alien concept of state which Hussein adopted, a pretext sufficient to mobilise his society

57 See statement by messenger sent from Hussein, a member of the Harb tribe, 18 August 1915, FO 371/2486.
58 L/P&S/10/526, No. 7.
59 Glubb, *Britain and the Arabs*, p. 58.
60 Yapp, p. 279.
61 L/P&S/10/523.

in the short term, became a permanent psychological fixation which distorted his concept of his power. His ambitions were partly fixed by a practical need to sustain his new foreign alliance: when Russia leaked details of the Sykes–Picot Agreement, Hussein at first struggled to believe Britain's assurances that these were forged, for by that time he was relying heavily on Britain for practical support, and was essentially incapable of standing alone.

The Hussein–McMahon correspondence

In the consideration of British wartime policy in Hijaz there is frequent debate about whether Britain, through McMahon, deliberately misled Hussein by guaranteeing that, in exchange for participating in the Arab revolt, he would be assisted in establishing himself as ruler of a much larger Arab territory. It is reasonable to argue that British officials misled Hussein over his future leadership prospects, by juxtaposing the Hussein–McMahon correspondence and the Sykes–Picot Agreement,[62] the latter specifying agreed spheres of influence and contradicting aspects of postwar policy indicated in the letters to Hussein.

Since a formal treaty between Britain and Hussein was another diplomatic option, it is important to consider why Britain and its most important wartime Arabian ally did not conclude a treaty, for this omission had dire consequences for Hussein's security later. Because of the key role Hussein played in Britain's Arabian wartime strategy, Hussein surely had some leverage to insist on a written treaty,[63] but he did not press

62 The Sykes–Picot Agreement was the secret agreement written by Sir Mark Sykes and his French counterpart to reconcile French, English and Russian claims on Middle Eastern territories. Finished in draft form on 16 April 1916 it culminated in the Sykes–Picot Agreement, given final form in a letter from Grey, the foreign secretary, on 16 May 1916. While it envisaged Arab independence, it also assumed that the Arabs would need French foreign assistance in the area from Damascus to Mosul, and British assistance in the area from Gaza to Kirkuk. Palestine was to be internationalised. The texts of the letters composing the agreement are in *Documents on British Foreign Policy*, Series I, Vol. IV, pp. 241–51. (See also FO 141/766/70, 7 November 1918.) In November 1917, new pressure was created by the Bolsheviks who were angered by France and Britain's dismissal of Russian claims to Palestine and Arab territories: they leaked the secret agreement, and a copy was forwarded to Hussein.

63 That is, more leverage than Ibn Saud who signed a treaty with Great Britain in 1915, articulated in "Memorandum on British Commitments to Bin Saud", 16

for one: "what we were asked to promote was simply independence of the Arabs from their present overlord".[64] It is plausible that Hussein did not seek a formal British treaty because he considered the McMahon correspondence a sufficiently firm guarantee.

One might also argue that Britain, while using Hussein as a military figurehead, did not perceive his authority as substantial enough to warrant a treaty. For instance, Sykes' report to the British Cabinet prior to the revolt portrayed Hussein's authority as precarious: "The Sherif . . . has probably committed himself further than he intended in his negotiations, and now owing to the Turks finding him out, has to rise whether he will or no." Hussein would perhaps, the Cabinet suggested be "smashed up by the Turks at leisure".[65] Several months after the revolt, the chief of the imperial general staff commented, "[Hussein's] authority over the Arabs is the slightest."[66] Viewed in this way, Hussein's limited strategic options precluded the formal articulation of his British alliance, and the greater power dictated the terms.

The Hussein–McMahon correspondence provides a formal record of British guarantees and expresses the extent of Britain's explicit commitments to, and specific conditions of, the alliance during the Arab revolt and postwar period. Policy was clarified, debated, recorded and formally adopted at Cabinet level, following analysis in London by the foreign office in response to incoming reports about both Hussein and Ibn Saud from the British high commissioner in Cairo and the Arab Bureau. Britain's formal response was then outlined to these allies. Such communications show generally that Hussein's relationship with the Great Power fluctuated, and also that the allies were mutually dependent. For instance, Wilson found it necessary to express foreign office policy to Hussein in September 1917, following Hussein's intercession in Yemeni affairs:

> The following formula clearly shows the principle regulating the policy of the British Government and I am instructed to inform your Highness of its contents and to ask your Highness to let me

November 1918, No. 5120; L/P&S/10/2182/193, Pts. 7, 8. See also FO/371/2489, file 1385.

64 Cairo to foreign secretary, 19 April 1916, FO 371/2786.

65 See secret appreciation, 6 June 1916, CAB 17/176.

66 W. R. Robertson, chief of the imperial general staff, 13 November 1916, CAB 17/176.

> have your views as to its practical application to the existing local conditions in the Yemen. The British Government will provide every assistance in their power to Arabs fighting for their freedom against the Turks . . . That in doing so we have no intention of departing from our traditional policy of non-interference in religious or internal Arabian affairs and we do not wish to take sides in disputes between Arabs.[67]

An important question concerning the Hussein–McMahon correspondence is whether Hussein would have launched the revolt without British encouragement and specific guarantees. In these letters, Hussein suggested several times that he would revolt regardless of Britain's assistance.[68] He was perhaps confident about initiating an independent coercive campaign since he had just successfully rallied the bedouin over the Hijaz railway issue and had acquired the promise of nationalist support from Syria. Other statements suggest that his fast-deteriorating relations with the Ottomans were propelling him into the revolt.[69] His comments elsewhere, however, clearly indicated that British military assistance was an essential incentive for the uprising.[70] In response to Britain's original approach for Hussein's support against the Ottomans, his son Abdallah's acceptance on behalf of the Hashemites in September 1914 was belligerent and qualified:

> So long as she [Great Britain] protects the rights of our country and the rights of the person of His Highness our present Emir . . . and the rights . . . of his independence . . . and supports us against any foreign aggression . . . and providing that the Government of Great

67 British agency, Jeddah, 18 September 1917, to Sharif Hussein, as conveyed by the under-secretary of state for foreign affairs, FO 141/814/3665.

68 "The only thing that prevents me from uprising against the Turkish Empire is the Moslem world . . . The whole of the Arab nation has decided in these last years to live, and to accomplish their freedom and grasp the reins of their Administration both in theory and in practice." (L/P&S/10/526.)

69 Regarding his relations with the Ottomans, in July 1915 he wrote to McMahon, ". . . perhaps causes might spring up which would break these relations even before you arrive at your country." (L/P&S/10/526.)

70 "Your expression 'we do not want to push you into any hasty action which might jeopardise the success of your aim' does not need any more explanation except what we may ask for, when necessary, such as arms, ammunition &c." (L/P&S/10/526.)

> Britain would guarantee these fundamental principles clearly and in writing.[71]

The British government confirmed these preliminary principles in a telegram from the foreign office on 31 October 1914.

The main question arising from the correspondence is how far Britain was responsible for Hussein's understanding that the McMahon letters guaranteed that he would rule over a future pan-Arab kingdom. The correspondence records many issues over which Hussein and Britain explicitly disagreed and continued to disagree, regarding territories and conflicting boundary claims throughout the Arab world. A major handicap for Hussein was that McMahon's correspondence, which acted as a working agreement for the duration of the war, was from the outset conditionally phrased. Hussein was told, "the strength and permanence of our whole agreement must depend on the nature and quality of the Arabs' cooperation in active measures in the meantime". Britain, while acknowledging Hussein's role as an important Arab spokesman, explicitly stated that until he was formally recognised by all Arabs "it would be futile to treat with him alone" and that similar negotiations must be undertaken with other rulers, such as al-Idrisi and the imam of Yemen.[72]

The element of the Hussein–McMahon correspondence which most specifically affected Hussein's political authority was the issue of his future leadership in Syria where his revolt enjoyed support. While McMahon's written assurances to Hussein contradicted Britain's Syria policy at another level (Sir Mark Sykes was secretly conceding future control over Syria to France), the contradiction was not in McMahon's explicit statements. McMahon was "cautious by nature" and "not of a temperament to deviate from Whitehall's instructions",[73] and the wording of his correspondence with Hussein strongly suggested that France would be given priority with regard to its interest in Syria.[74] This phrasing would have sufficed to

71 See "Summary of Great Britain's commitments to King Hussein", FO, political intelligence department, *c.* October 1919, FO 141/557.

72 Cairo to foreign secretary, 19 April 1916, FO 371/2786.

73 Monroe, p. 31.

74 In order to reassure Hussein, who was becoming nervous about the prospect of the revolt, McMahon on 24 October 1915 dispatched the assurance to him which has since been the subject of controversy. The substance was that, with three exceptions, Britain was "prepared to recognise and support the independence of

make most leaders recognise Britain's priorities. Should Hussein have displayed a shrewder sense of statesmanship here? Or was it reasonable to expect him to accept the assurances of a great power at face value? Thus, while the Sykes–Picot Agreement is often cited as double-dealing by the Allies; the wording in McMahon's letters shows that there was no explicit breach of faith. Instead it may be argued that the breach of faith was Britain's implicit exploitation of one dynamic which encouraged Hussein's revolt, the support of the Syrian groups, while planning a different political fate for Syria itself.

The Arab Bureau

Hussein's relations with Britain were also affected by the formation by Britain of a temporary wartime department: the Arab Bureau. This was a special department in the Cairo agency led by Brigadier General Gilbert F. Clayton, chief of Egyptian intelligence. Clayton, although of military rank, was an appointee of the Cairo high commissioner, Lt Col Sir A. H. McMahon.

British wartime policy towards the leadership in Hijaz was mainly affected by the creation and work of this bureau, whose original objectives were to harmonise British political activity in the Near East, to disseminate information on Turco-German policy, and to co-ordinate British propaganda. Under Sir Reginald Wingate, it was a foreign office body but had military overtones.[75] Although its staff were not administrators conversant with the policy conflicts and precedents of procedure between Whitehall departments, or experienced in international diplomacy, the

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the Arabs" within the very wide limits that Hussein had demanded. Excluded were: first, coastal areas "lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo" which, McMahon said, were "not purely Arab"; second, regions affected "by our existing treaties with Arab chiefs" (which meant the Persian Gulf area of Arabia); and third, regions in which "the interests of her ally France" limited Britain's freedom to act alone. This third point was written in the knowledge that at the moment of writing, the British foreign secretary had proposed a meeting with the French ambassador to discuss Syria's frontiers (McMahon to Sir Edward Grey, foreign secretary, 19 April 1916, L/P&S/10/525).

75 The acting director wrote at its closure in 1920 that "until the formation of a Hejaz operations staff in 1917, the Bureau also dealt with all military requirements for the Arab revolt." (FO 371/5196, *aide-mémoire* by N. Garland, Ramleh, 20 August 1920.)

Arab Bureau nevertheless served as an embryonic foreign office to the new self-declared independent Hijaz state, replacing its previous Ottoman infrastructure. The bureau's duties included supervising the operation of Hijaz subsidies, the repatriation of Arab refugees, the organisation of payments to elements of the Arab army, and the management of Arab government business in Egypt.[76] Given its brief, the Arab Bureau justified such active participation in the government of Hijaz as intelligence work, "diplomatic and consular work on behalf of the Government of the Hijaz . . . to maintain touch with current Arabian politics and intrigue".[77] Also, the bureau implicitly implemented a third strain of foreign policy determined by its maverick "zealots", in particular T. E. Lawrence.[78] As a result of such active participation in Hijaz governance, combined with extreme individualism, the bureau often conflicted with the Cairo agency, yet both maintained a united hostility against the Government of India's Arabian policy.

British administrations in Arabia during World War I in relation to Hussein's authority

The wartime division of Britain's control in Arabia created an overlap in the hegemonies of its departments, which formulated their policies on the bases of quite different experiences of Middle Eastern social groups, which varied in nature from region to region. Thus the internal contest for Arabian authority became affected by the administrative *scale* of empire, by its divisive channelling of political forces and philosophies, which ranged from the Balfour Declaration to Arab nationalism: "if Anglo-French, Anglo-Arab and Anglo-Zionist relations contributed to the absence of a unified policy in the Middle East, so, too, did inter-office rivalry at Whitehall".[79]

76 Allenby to Rt. Hon. Lord Hardinge of Penshurst, private letter, 3 March 1920, FO 371/5196.

77 See draft minute of April 1920, FO 371/5196.

78 John S. Galbraith and Robert A. Huttenback, "Bureaucracies at war: the British in the Middle East in the First World War", *National and International Politics in the Middle East: Essays in Honour of Elie Kedourie*, ed. E. Ingram (London, Frank Cass, 1986), p. 113; hereinafter cited as Galbraith and Huttenback.

79 Troeller, pp. 73–4.

The widest context of these policy ambiguities was the uncertain function of the British Cabinet as a decision-making body. The Cabinet lacked "secretariat or agenda" and was "not well designed for the rapid transaction of an ever-increasing load of business". There was "no regular machinery for the study of long-range problems or for drawing up emergency plans; nor . . . provision for systematic contacts with the service chiefs". Into this uncertain Cabinet structure flowed information from divided departments, with the Cabinet relying "upon oral briefings from the service ministers for following the progress of the war".[80] Such briefings and recommendations encouraged conflicts in the formulation of policy because of "the tendency of the minister to identify himself with the department which he led against the competing claims of other agencies . . . subordinating policy decisions to departmental interests".[81]

The problem for wartime administration of Arabia was that many jurisdictions collided, including those of: the foreign office; the war office, the Arab Bureau, the India Office; the Government of India; the high commission to Egypt; the Sirdar of Sudan and the Levant consular service.[82] In 1915 the British foreign secretary decided that "political control of the Hijaz and its ports should be under Cairo".[83] The head of the administrative command was McMahon, the high commissioner in Cairo, the highest-ranking official in the Middle East, who was replaced in 1918 by General Sir Reginald Francis Wingate. The Cairo agency reported to the foreign office; however, the military commander of forces in Egypt took his orders directly from the chief of the imperial general staff.

An example of the fragmentation of administration is given in the following postwar summary prepared in 1920 which emphasised the different elements of control which had evolved in Najd and Hijaz during the war:

> (d) ARABIA Nejd and Hail – by the I.O. [India Office], through the Civil Commissioner, Baghdad. Questions of policy are discussed by

80 Max Beloff, *Imperial Sunset, Britain's Liberal Empire 1897–1921*, 2nd edn (London, Macmillan, 1987), pp. 188–9.

81 Galbraith and Huttenback, pp. 104–5.

82 Monroe, p. 37; and Galbraith and Huttenback, p. 105.

83 See telegram of 31 March 1915, political resident, Aden, to commander-in-chief, East Indies station, FO 141/610/5666.

> the Interdepartmental Conference of Middle Eastern Affairs. Yemen and Asir – by the FO, through the High Commissioner, Cairo and the resident, Aden. Questions of policy are discussed by the Interdepartmental Conference of Middle Eastern Affairs. (g) the Hedjaz – By the FO, through the High Commissioner, Cairo, and the British Agent at Jeddah. Questions of policy are discussed by the Interdepartmental Conference of Middle Eastern Affairs.[84]

Such bureaucratic confusion was still apparent as late as 1918 when, at a meeting of the Middle East Committee, the committee still needed to define itself, outline its history, scope and duties. It had evolved from the Mesopotamia Committee, which was formed solely to administer Mesopotamia, but also began to receive queries relating to Hijaz, Aden and Arabia generally. As a result its duties changed in an impromptu manner, so that the war Cabinet formally expanded its functions."[85] Poor communications contributed to the departmental confusion and affected decisions regarding Arabia and its leaders. It was difficult to categorise correspondence about the Arab revolt as either operational, and thus of interest to the war office, or political, and thus of interest to foreign office.[86] The operational–political ambiguity of such classifications was intensified by the developing role of the Arab Bureau. Letters headed "Cairo" went to the director of military intelligence at the war office. Ambiguities and omissions in correspondence were intensified by bureaucratic rivalry: "efforts to promote unity of command were . . . frustrated by resistance from the various departments involved and from officers serving under their jurisdiction".[87]

Such administrative confusion damaged Britain's image by creating policy inconsistencies, and enabling subterfuge by departments promoting different indigenous leaders. For instance, the McMahon letter of 24

84 Confidential Print of 17 May 1920, FO 141/436/7568.

85 See War Cabinet: Middle East Committee, Minutes of the Meeting, FO 371/3394, Confidential Print of 17 May 1920, in FO 141/436/7563.

86 Confidential Print of 17 May 1920, in FO 141/436/7568. For instance, intelligence papers concerning Arabia 1914–18 are not classified under the war office group at the British Public Record Office, but under the foreign office (FO 636). Also, for instance, the archive of the Arab Bureau is within the foreign office record group.

87 See Thomson to Pipsqueak, 19 December 1937, in Lyndon Bell Manuscripts, Imperial War Museum, p. 33, Chapter 6, May 1995, as quoted in Galbraith and Huttenback, p. 111.

October 1915[88] did not tally with the Anglo-Najd treaty of 26 December 1915,[89] supervised by the chief political officer at Basra, and in May 1917 Sykes was forced to apologise to the Basra authorities because the Sykes–Picot Agreement had not been forwarded to them.[90]

The British Government of India's resistance to the Arab Bureau's endorsement of Hussein's authority was a central feature of interdepartmental rivalries, for the creation of the Arab Bureau generated dispute with the Government of India over the future chain of command in the Middle East. With its sense of imperial importance, the Government of India naturally resisted the policies of a temporary and less powerful administration in Cairo. During the world war the Government of India reduced its claims on Arabia but still asserted its responsibility for affairs south of the Hijaz.[91] The secretary of state for India wrote to the foreign department in Delhi in June 1916 insisting that the British Government, not the Arab Bureau, should decide all questions of policy, and that the bureau's role should be merely to collect intelligence and monitor propaganda.[92]

In July 1916, Sykes expressed the view that the India Office and the foreign office had become two conflicting schools of thought on Middle Eastern war policy. The India Office guarded the security of the Persian Gulf and maintained its traditional contacts with leaders in eastern Arabia, including Ibn Saud,[93] while the foreign office had a broader range of interests: Arab aspirations for independence; French demands for control of Syria; and the Zionist campaign for a Jewish homeland. Sykes stated to the Cabinet in July 1916, in a secret session, "the Government of

88 This letter stated that, except for Mersina, Alexandretta, and parts of Syria west of Damascus, Hama, Homs and Aleppo, and except for those Arab chieftaincies with whom Britain had treaties, Britain would recognise the rest of the Arab territories with limitations and boundaries specified by Hussein as independent – and therefore, implicitly his future subject territories (IOR L/P&S/10/526).

89 Troeller, p. 254.

90 Monroe, p. 36.

91 H. St John Philby, *Arabian Jubilee* (New York, Day, 1953), p. 3; hereinafter cited as Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*.

92 Arab Bureau Papers, Vol. IX, FO 882, June 1916.

93 Monroe, p. 25 and Briton Cooper Busch, *Britain, India and the Arabs, 1914–1921* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1971), p. 80; hereinafter cited as Busch, *Britain, India and the Arabs*. See also Silverfarb, p. 80.

India is incapable of handling the Arab question . . . the British officials in India are themselves influenced by [a] pro-Turkish atmosphere . . . The Arab movement, as such, is disliked in India".[94] In the Government of India's view, the Arab Bureau misused the Islamic dimension of the war. The Government of India also had an antipathy towards nationalism and these two considerations together made it disapprove of Hussein as a candidate for a broader Arabian power.[95] The Government of India feared that, by encouraging an open revolt against the Sublime Porte, Britain might be accused of dividing Islam.[96] The enmity between Arab Bureau pro-nationalists and Indian officials intensified in 1917 after the Bolshevik revolution in the Soviet Union because of the Bolsheviks' identification with Asian nationalism. In a declaration in December 1917 the Bolsheviks singled out India as being ripe for revolution, thus immediately threatening the Government of India's security.[97]

The continuing clarification of British guarantees to Hussein

One of the first projects which McMahon undertook in April 1916 through the newly-created Arab Bureau was a summary outlining the policies debated and agreed between Hussein and Britain. In it, he distanced Britain from Hussein's broader ambitions for leadership: "the Sherif, [is] posing as spokesman for the 'Arab Nation' ". Such distancing persisted in British records throughout the war:

> the Sherif though he has always written as spokesmen of the Arab Nation, is not, so far as we know, supported by any organisation of Arabs nearly general enough to secure throughout, or indeed in the larger parts of the Arabia area, the automatic acceptance of terms agreed to by him. No such organisation exists . . .[98]

94 Verbal Report to Cabinet of 6 July 1916 in "Policy in the Middle East: the Arab Question", CAB 17/176.

95 Brigadier Clayton complained in January 1916 that India was "obsessed with the idea that Britain intends to create a powerful Arab Kingdom." (FO 882/Vol. 12, letter of 28 January 1916.)

96 See copy of despatch from Sir R. Wingate to Mr Balfour, circulated to Cabinet, 11 June 1917, CAB 23/22.

97 R. H. Ullman, *Intervention and the War* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 28–9.

98 Glubb, *Britain and the Arabs*, p. 58.

Thus, from the beginning, McMahon's internal notes stressed that the Arab Bureau did not perceive Hussein as a credible candidate for pan-Arab nationalist leadership, and did not believe that any single Arab leader could represent all Arab factions and interests. Britain was sceptical that even a loose confederation could be maintained since "the Arabs' political tendencies" were "centrifugal" and "it would require an amazing combination of diplomacy, force and promise of material advantage to suppress their sectarianism and independence".[99]

As early as April 1916 McMahon was insistent that Britain had not agreed to "recognise any single political chief of the independent Arab area, or the subjection of any Arab chief to any other". Rather, Britain had agreed to recognise the independence of Arabic-speaking areas where it was "free to act without detriment to the interests of France".[100] Over a year later McMahon reiterated this consistent position: an unsigned *aide-mémoire* from the Cairo residency on 23 December 1917 made the following remark with regard to Britain's concept of its obligations prior to the Arab revolt,

> . . . we guarantee to keep a ring – defined approximately in these negotiations – within which Arabs' autonomy shall have free play. We did not guarantee the pre-eminence of the Sherif, or another, within this ring; although the King considers that our conduct of these negotiations through him implied our willingness to see his pre-eminence a fact.[101]

However, the secrecy with which the Sykes–Picot Agreement was negotiated suggests that Britain's nationalist ideological agenda in Arabia was a pretext for juggling and exploiting its various Middle Eastern assets during the wartime crisis. It was the secrecy in which the negotiations were shrouded, followed by the leak of their content which differed from British promises to Hussein, that deepened the general impression that Britain had betrayed its understanding with Hussein in encouraging the revolt. In 1917 the Syrian groups in Cairo, for instance, were outraged because they had been "made to understand by the agent of the

99 See note by Cairo residency staff, 23 December 1917, CAB 27/23.
100 McMahon to Sir Edward Grey, foreign secretary, 1916, L/P&S/10/525.
101 See note by Cairo residency staff, 23 December 1917, CAB 27/23.

King of the Hejaz at Cairo that the Sharif has fully acquiesced in the programme of the British as to the Jews of Palestine and the taking of Syria by the French".[102] Hussein's legitimacy as an Arab nationalist had been severely damaged by the revelation of the Sykes–Picot Agreement. The fact that Britain had an alliance with Hussein indirectly associated him with these secret plans for French control which were contrary to the aspirations of the nationalist supporters outside his state. His reputation as a leader with integrity was greatly undermined.

A major criticism that can be levelled at Britain was that although it warned Hussein about French interests the extent to which those interests were to be satisfied was played down. As Glubb concluded, "the whole course of these negotiations exhibited a remarkable lack of clarity".[103] If the extent of British support for French claims to Syria had been made known to Hussein, he might have decided not to sever relations with the Ottomans; but as early as May 1915, long before the revolt, Sir Mark Sykes and Georges Picot had gone to Jeddah to demonstrate to Hussein the indivisibility of the French and British alliance. This was a clear indication that French territorial interests would ultimately prevail. A draft version of the Sykes–Picot Agreement was given to McMahon in Cairo, before the agreement was formalised in May 1916;[104] but a telegram from Wingate in June 1918 stressed that Hussein "was never officially informed of Sykes–Picot Agreement".[105] Sykes expressed astonishment, denying Wingate's claim: "The King has frequently been given the outline and detail of the agreement in question, both by myself, Monsieur Picot, Colonel Bremond and Commander Hogarth, who was especially sent down for the purpose."[106] When the Sykes–Picot Agreement became public in 1917, Britain's response to accusations of betrayal was to argue that it had "specifically warned the Sheriff that this area was excluded because of the French claims".[107] In 1918, the foreign office was adamant that,

102 It took British reassurances to bring the Syrians round to the view that, as there was not to be a Jewish government, they would have some advantage over newcomers (Monroe, p. 45, citing the Yale Papers, Report No. 7, 12 December 1917).

103 Glubb, *Britain and the Arabs,* p. 74.

104 R/15/1/594.

105 Wingate to Sykes, Cairo, 30 June 1918, FO 371/3381.

106 Memorandum by Sir Mark Sykes, *c.* 18 June 1918, FO 371/2274.

107 Glubb, *Britain and the Arabs,* p. 68.

> His Majesty's Government have committed themselves to no special position towards King Hussein which is incompatible with their agreements with France. So long as our relations with France do not suffer, it is clearly our interest that we should have a predominant position with King Hussein and any other Arab rulers in the independent area.[108]

Subsequently, Britain took pains to clarify and affirm the extent of its commitment to Hussein. In reply to the sharif's demand for an explanation, the British government replied that "the Turkish note had omitted the stipulations contained in the Sykes–Picot Agreement, which made all the proposed arrangements subject to agreement with the future Arab state".[109] This assertion that new areas of foreign power control would not be established without his consultation served to reassure Hussein. From the records it is clear that, by 1917, it had been explained to Hussein that the dimensions of the future authority being guaranteed to him were qualified by "the possible necessity of modifications owing to the course of the war and changes in the mutual relations of the Allies".[110]

As far as regards the different interpretations put on the conditions of alliance between them by Hussein and Britain, the general impression is that there were misunderstandings, sometimes concerning translation, which cannot be overlooked, but that there was no explicit documented deception or retraction by Britain of issues agreed formally. The foreign office complained in 1919,

> The position is complicated by the King's [Hussein's] habit of ignoring or refusing to take note of conditions . . . to which he objects and then carrying on as if the particular question had been settled between us according to his own desires.[111]

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108 Geoffrey Lewis, "The Ottoman proclamation of jihad in 1914", *Arabic and Islamic Garland: Historical, Educational and Literary Papers Presented to Abdul-Latif Tibawi* (London, Islamic Cultural Centre, 1977), p. 102; hereinafter cited as Lewis, "The Ottoman proclamation of jihad".

109 Glubb, *Britain and the Arabs*, pp. 73–4.

110 *Ibid.*

111 See "Summary of Great Britain's commitments to King Hussein", FO political intelligence department, n.d., *c.* October 1919, in FO 141/557.

It should also be emphasised that Hussein attempted to confuse the issue of guarantees: for instance in August 1918 he re-presented his original demands from the 1915 negotiations to Wingate, asserting that these had been specific British commitments to him. He requested explanations of British concessions, while admitting that the British government had done nothing "contrary or departing from the said decisions" [i.e. those of 1915].[112] The foreign office concluded that, most probably, Hussein's strategy in this matter was not obfuscation but genuine confusion and lack of diplomatic acumen: "the King genuinely believes his memorandum to present the sense of what was tacitly, if not explicitly, agreed by HMG . . ."[113] Thus Britain continued to clarify its guarantees, and Hussein to resist clarification while at the same time both made use of Hussein's religious authority to further their strategic goals.

Religious authority and the Arab revolt

Hussein's religious authority originally gained him Britain's backing as the head of its campaign to harry the Turks, not because of long-term ideological goals but for short-term strategic reasons: his opposition to the Ottomans would give the British campaign a certain Islamic legitimacy. For the Ottomans, Hussein's traditional religious office had legitimised Ottoman attempts prior to the war "to instrumentalize Islam as a means to integrate the Muslim Peoples of the empire".[114] Thus in 1914 when the sultan–caliph proclaimed jihad, demanding that the world Muslim community participate, Hussein was repeatedly canvassed to contribute.[115] The Ottomans' ploy was to warn Arab subjects that their faith and its major protector faced extinction.[116] Hussein responded that he feared famine if Britain blockaded Hijaz, and asked the Ottoman

112 See letter reprinted in Confidential Print of 5 November 1918, FO 141/557.

113 See Eastern Department, FO, Confidential Print of 5 November 1918, FO 141/557.

114 This was "the basis for a new type of politics during the reign of Abdul-Hamid II (1876–1909)"; see Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (London, Routledge, 1992), p. 170).

115 Vassiliev, p. 286.

116 Lewis, "The Ottoman proclamation of jihad", p. 102.

defence minister Enver Pasha to acknowledge Hijazi independence. By avoiding the declaration of jihad, Hussein so angered the Ottomans that they planned his deposition while pretending that he had declared jihad, and made propaganda capital by sending the Prophet's standard from Medina to Damascus. However, the evident lack of military support from the Hashemites made it clear to the Arabs that Hussein had not endorsed the Ottoman demand.

In deciding to break irrevocably with the Ottomans Hussein stressed to Britain that his hesitancy derived from concern over Muslim world opinion.[117] "His greatest concern at the time was to justify his actions to a Muslim audience."[118] This was wise, since it was religious authority which mainly determined his right to rule and the world Muslim community would not favour opposition to its caliph. As a Muslim leader he might damage his legitimacy by extending his power in a non-Islamic manner. It would be crucial to legitimise the revolt in Hijaz religiously because of the social predominance of Islam, exemplified in the attitude of Meccans whose religious identity was stronger than their cosmopolitan ones: "Muslims from all parts of the world came to Hejaz on pilgrimage, to study in the *harams*, and to conduct business . . . Insofar as there was a common identity among these peoples it was based on religion, not on Arab ethnicity."[119]

These Islamic ideological traditions meant that Hussein's religious authority gave him the influence to channel the society's military energy and goals into an ostensibly nationalist cause. A distinction must be made between Hussein's religious leadership and his use of religious ideology to legitimise the revolt. Although Hussein's military–political aims in leading the revolt were a quest for independence and extended power, on the false assumption that the Hijazis were a cohesive people who wished to wrest self-determination, his propaganda stressed the revolt as an Islamic movement.[120] In fact, both Arab and Ottoman propaganda

117 See Cheetham despatch, 13 December 1914, L/P&S/10/521.

118 "The Ottoman Empire has been taken over by a reckless party which has launched an attack on Islam, an attack which is a *fitna* . . ." (*Al-Qibla*, No. 1 (15 Shuwwal 1334), and No. 10 (17 Dhu al-Qa'ada 1334)); Cleveland, p. 89.

119 Ochsenwald, "Ironic origins", p. 200.

120 Hussein's propaganda organ of the revolt was *Al-Qibla* (published in Mecca, 1916–24). The CUP's *Jaridat al-Sharq*, published in Damascus, and *al-Alam al-Islami*, published in Istanbul, made a concerted effort "to appeal to Arab sensibilities." (Cleveland, p. 87.)

after the Arab revolt began in 1916 justified their conflict "as an Islamic necessity".[121]

Thus, "for all the political changes brought about by World War I, the regional contest between Sherif Husayn and the Ottoman state was characterised by ideological continuity".[122] The Ottomans stressed the Islamic character of the Ottoman empire, and linked its survival to that of Islam. Similarly, Hussein's challenge to imperial authority was made on the grounds of Islamic legitimacy when he, too, requested that the faithful rally behind him. His proclamation of the revolt, on 8 July 1916,[123] justified it on the grounds that the CUP had altered certain Islamic laws, written disrespectfully of the Prophet, and shelled the Mecca Haram: "we cannot leave our religion and people to be the playthings of the Committee".[124] Hussein's Meccan newspaper (*Al-Qibla*) further attempted to legitimise the revolt, claiming that the Ottoman leaders did not care "about religion or the Shari'a", and lived "under the signs of apostasy and unbelief".[125] Thus Hussein's ideologues exploited the indigenous framework of religious identity, along with the Ottoman empire's internal divisions over secular reformist and religious forms of governance, to legitimise his British-backed seizure of power.[126]

Nonetheless, the religious legitimacy of Hussein's act was substantially threatened by international Muslim loyalty which perceived the revolt as a betrayal of Islam by alliance with a Christian power. The Ottomans made capital out of Hussein's supposed betrayal, stressing his previous officialdom within the Ottoman system and accusing him of "the disobedience or mutiny of an official who has been led astray by his ambition or by English influence."[127] Anticipating this, in proclaiming the revolt Hussein took pains to explain away his past cooperation with the Turks.[128]

121 Cleveland, p. 86.
122 *Ibid.*
123 Rafi', p. 264.
124 See report from Delhi of 7 July 1916, FO 371/2274.
125 Cleveland, p. 89.
126 *Al-Qibla*, No. 1 (1 August 1916) and No. 10 (30 August 1916).
127 From a statement made by the Ottoman legation at Berne, 2 September 1916 (*Arab Bulletin*, Vol. I, No. 25, p. 340).
128 See Secret Intelligence Report, FO 371/2274.

The caliph's potential for condemning Hussein was an advantage early in the revolt when he had perhaps greater legitimacy as the head of the Islamic empire. However, the religious authority of Hussein, who claimed descent from the Prophet, could transcend the caliph's. Because of Islam's tradition of continual purification, those who might be considered to be of lower religious status were still a powerful challenge to a leader's religious integrity. Thus, both leaders' religious legitimacies counteracted their attempts to undermine each other, so that when the sultan proclaimed a counter-revolt,[129] popular opinion was divided between these rival claims to religious authority.[130]

The Islamic doctrine of dutiful obedience to the ruler was also an effective instrument of power: a leader such as Hussein, whose religious legitimacy was under attack, could invoke this doctrine as a strategic response to mobilise coercive support and maintain state cohesion against *fitna*. For instance, Hussein's religious authority offered him the power to control Ibn Saud as the latter explained to Shakespear before the revolt. If Hussein declared jihad, Ibn Saud should ideally be seen to support the sharif of Mecca. However, Hussein did not use this means of bringing Ibn Saud to heel, although such an act would have depleted Ibn Saud's military resources and diminished his postwar coercive capacity. In this period, Hussein used the Islamic doctrine of obedience to enforce his secular power: he imprisoned twenty-eight Meccans who supported the Ottoman jihad.[131] Thus Hussein used his image as protector of the *Haramain* to suppress activism and enforce his political control. He also carefully nurtured the legitimacy of his image by ensuring a safe passage for the pilgrimage in 1916, cultivating religious loyalty among pilgrims, including Ibn Rashid's visiting notables, and "exerted his energies towards winning these men over to his side".[132]

The fact that the sharifate was nominally an Ottoman appointment meant that Hussein was now replaced with a Unionist protégé, Ali

129 The Ottoman government declared jihad in the name of the sultan/caliph (Rafi', p. 263).
130 Rafi', p. 263.
131 Rafi', pp. 263–4.
132 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 26, 16 October 1916 (Vol. 1, Archive Editions reprint, 1984).

Heidar,[133] a new religious authority whom the Ottomans intended to use to fragment popular religious cohesion:

> The Sharif of Mecca is a personage selected by the Imperial Government from among the numerous descendants of the Prophet, and appointed by an Imperial decree . . . In case of neglect of his duties, he is dismissed like any other official and replaced by another Sharif.[134]

Arriving in Medina in September 1916 Ali Heidar converted several tribes' loyalty and also won support from Amir Rabigh, managing to delay many of the British supplies dispatched to the Hashemite forces. However, he could not conquer Mecca, partly because the Ottomans were unable to arm and equip him, and he was thus forced to leave for Lebanon.[135]

His instigation of the revolt against an Islamic power undoubtedly permanently affected Hussein's religious authority throughout the world, evoking many lukewarm Muslim responses. Captain Bray's opinion was that the Indian Muslims would have backed Hussein's authority if they had considered him sufficiently powerful.[136] However, an anti-sharifian faction in India[137] emphasised the dangers to the Holy Places, and their loyalty to the caliph:

> opinion in India is far from being unanimous. Resolutions antagonistic to the Sheriff were passed at meetings held in Lucknow . . . and at Calcutta, as well as at an emergency meeting of the Council of the All-India Moslem League.[138]

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133 In 1916 the Ottomans appointed Ali Heidar Pasha of the Dhawi Zaid Hashemite branch. See Harry C. Joseph Luke, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London, Macmillan, 1936), p. 173.

134 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 25, 7 October 1916 (Vol. 1, Archive Editions reprint, 1984).

135 Nasif, pp. 94–5.

136 See Memo by Captain N. E. Bray of May 1917, FO 371/3057.

137 They were more influenced by the eighteenth-century Wahhabi *da'wa*.

138 L/P&S/10/523; several *Arab Bulletins* report on Indian public opinion, notably No. 15 of 10 August 1916: "The Arab Revolt . . . came as a bombshell, and caused a profound sensation." A strong pro-Ottoman Indian lobby began an anti-sharifian campaign based on the revolt's endangerment of the Holy Places (*Arab Bulletin*, No. 15, 10 August 1916).

Britain no doubt realised that its support of Hussein would partly erode Islamic perceptions of his legitimacy, but to Britain he was important only as an expedient to divide popular support for the Caliph in Hijaz and at an international level to shore up the legitimacy of British intervention in the region. It was not Britain's concern if Hussein's Christian alliance permanently damaged his religious authority – an attitude which he should have recognised and accommodated in his wartime strategy. Hussein's use of his religious position to legitimise his seizure of control worked only in the short term: he relinquished some of his legitimacy to lead the revolt, and never regained it.

The damage to Hussein's religious legitimacy was increased by his aspirations to the caliphate, an ambition which was not really a public issue but rather one discussed privately by all political players during this period.[139] Hussein's ambitions for the caliphate were self-inspired rather than derived from British guarantees. One India Office official noted:

> If, when he [i.e. Sharif Hussein] has asserted his independence he claims the Khalifate, it will be for . . . others to acclaim him as such. Whether the various Arab rulers will do so will doubtless depend upon what the claim imports for them, and how far, if it implies political sovereignty over territory which they at present rule, they are willing to subordinate themselves and their subjects to him.[140]

And Hussein's neighbouring leaders were unlikely to endorse a new religious authority which threatened their territory. When Hussein's alliance with Britain began, the foreign office instructed McMahon in this regard:

> If the Sherif, with the consent of his co-religionists, is proclaimed Khalif, he may rest assured that His Majesty's Government will welcome the resumption of the Khalifate by an Arab of their

139 Cleveland's review of CUP and Hashemite propaganda identifies the centrality of the caliphate in their debate. *Al-Qibla* avoided any suggestion of exchanging a Hashemite for the Ottoman caliph, but rather emphasised the Islamic crime committed by the Unionists in, essentially, imprisoning the caliph. See: *Al-Qibla*, No. 10 (17 Dhu al-Qa'ada 1334); *Ibid.*, No. 1 (15 Shuwwal 1334). Hussein's proclamations cited hadiths which justified action against these oppressors (*Ibid.*, No. 31 (4 Safr 1335)). Cleveland.

140 See Holderness, India Office to foreign secretary, 24 June 1915, FO 371/2486.

> race, as already indicated in Lord Kitchener's communication of last November.[141]

However, Hussein's claim epitomises his overambitious illusions about his authority which began to stimulate inappropriate political strategy. The Ottoman press questioned his aspiration to an office which required power, intelligence and independence.[142] While it was perhaps acceptable for Hussein to be perceived as combating Turkish secular elements, it was more difficult for him to challenge the sultan–caliph, especially while allying himself with a Christian power. His claim to the caliphate was complex; it drew Britain and Muslims worldwide into a doctrinal and political quagmire, intensifying dissent during a major war and thus detracting from Hussein's popularity among British diplomats.

While Hussein's religious office and hereditary links were the basis for his candidature to the caliphate, it was a matter of great contention as to whether the caliph had to be an indigenous Arab, or more specifically a Hijazi, or whether a "foreigner" should hold the title. A Sudanese lobby led by the influential al-Mirghani was at the time advocating the return to an Arab caliphate. He told Britain that this would be a return to an older tradition, referring to "the lost Khalifate" and the need for Arab unity:

> . . . it is the duty of every true and faithful Arab to forget his personality and look only on the matter from the moral point of view, i.e. the independence of the Arabs and the restoration of the Mohammedan Khalifate to the rightful man of Koreishite descent after the lapse of so many centuries.[143]

Al-Mirghani believed that Hussein's candidacy would gradually win over Arab opinion, and that if a small number of Muslims outside Arabia

141 FO cipher telegram No. 598 to McMahon, 25 August 1915, L/P&S/10/523.

142 *al-'Alam al-Islami*, No. 17, 24 August 1916, p. 22.

143 Translation of memorandum by Ali al-Mirghani, Khartoum, 12 August 1915, L/P&S/10/523; hereinafter cited as al-Mirghani. The governor-general of Khartoum described Sayid Ali al-Mirghani as "the man of more religious influence in the Sudan than anyone else". (Khartoum to foreign secretary, 14 June 1915, FO 371/2486.)

refused to acknowledge him[144] this "would be of no great importance" as long as he was "acknowledged by the majority of Mohammedans".[145] The Arab Bureau appeared receptive to Hussein's claim, with Wingate concurring in al-Mirghani's suggestion that Britain should lobby "powerful Moslem chiefs in India" to support Hussein.[146] Concluding that Sudanese support for Hussein as caliph was strong, Wingate as early as 1915 had urged the foreign secretary to solicit Indian Muslim opinion and the divergent views of various Muslim nationalities and communities: "of course we must make no promises that we cannot redeem, but this should not prevent us . . . showing sympathy with Moslem aspirations".[147]

However, Hussein's claim to religious authority met opposition from another British diplomatic sphere, that of the government of India. The issue was referred to the under-secretary of state for India, but Muslims in India were not canvassed, for the Government of India feared that the threat of an Arab claim to the caliphate would alienate Indian Muslims: "an Arab Caliph or Imam buried away in the sands of the Arabian desert will appeal to Moslems nowhere".[148] The Aga Khan, the head of the less influential Ismaili sect, meeting with Sir Edward Grey, asserted that "Moslems in India were not well-disposed towards an Arab Khalifate".[149] McMahon from Cairo dismissed this opinion, claiming that the Ismaili's "would be opposed, on principle, to the establishment of a Sunnite Arabian Khalifate".[150] However, concern for Indian Muslim opinion determined Grey's conclusion that Britain should not become embroiled in this issue and risk stimulating trouble in India.[151] The Aga Khan was satisfied with Grey's promise that British support for Hussein was political and secular only, and that "Britain regarded the Khalifate as a thing which should be settled by Moslems for themselves."[152]

144 al-Mirghani prepared two briefs for the British, strongly advocating Hussein's candidacy as Arab caliph (translation of al-Mirghani letter, 6 May 1915, FO 371/2486).

145 Translation of al-Mirghani letter, 6 May 1915, FO 371/2486.

146 See private letter from Reginald Wingate to the foreign secretary, 15 May 1915, FO 371/2486.

147 Reginald Wingate to the foreign secretary, 15 May 1915, FO 371/2486.

148 Wilson to McMahon, 31 October 1916, Despatch No. 12, FO 371/2722.

149 Grey to McMahon, 2 November 1915, FO 371/2486.

150 McMahon to the foreign secretary, 5 December 1915, L/P&S/10/524.

151 Grey to McMahon, 2 November 1915, FO 371/2486.

152 Nasif, p. 74.

When Hussein initiated the revolt, his use of his religious authority was relatively effective in helping him to realise his bid for power. However, when he introduced his claim to widen his religious authority and become caliph, he initiated no practical strategy for achieving it. By contrast, in World War I, Ibn Saud focused his energy on developing long-term, practical, political assets and a socially appealing religious agenda. The gradual erosion of Hussein's religious authority shows that to sustain indigenous religious support it was vital to make inherited authority work with changing dynamics.

Coercion and cohesion: the dissipation of military capacity

Hussein's victory in the Arab revolt provides another example of the political illusions about his authority: he was perceived as leading a great coercive movement against the Ottomans but in fact his coercive arm was an uneasy social coalition in which cohesion was determined by motives other than loyalty. This deficiency of genuine coercive power was a constant weakness throughout his rule. From 1916 to 1918, however, he had the immediate advantage that his quest for power was conducted against a single, universally disliked, enemy: the Ottomans. From the military point of view Hussein always had to try to unite a piecemeal force from temporary alliances.

Tribal military support for Hussein was briefly stimulated by injections of British finance which increased his powers of political cohesion. Outside their own internal structures of loyalty, tribes were preoccupied by spoils of war. Hussein used money to extend allegiance to him to groups beyond Hijaz, poaching tribes on the Hijaz–Najd border,[153] which had been a traditional practice since the nineteenth-century Wahhabite–Hashemite skirmishes.[154] For example, in 1917 sections of

153 The first three tribes which Faisal won over were: the Harb (situated between Mecca and Medina), comprising two hundred thousand people, and one of the largest tribes in Arabia; the Juhaina (between the Red Sea coast and Medina); and the Billi (east of al-Wajh).

154 From 1797 onward, Hashemites perceived Wahhabis as a threat to their security and attempted to bar them from pilgrimage. For a full account see De Gaury, *Rulers*, pp. 181–9; Kostiner, "The Hashemite 'Tribal Confederacy'", p. 131.

Unaiza and Shammar expressed allegiance to Hussein. Colonel Hamilton (political officer of Kuwait) observed that Hussein bought loyalty from Buraida townsmen, Unaiza, Shaqra and Midhnib, with 4,000 of the "best fighting stock" from al-Qasim.[155] Hussein also enlisted the reliable Ugail and youth from al-Rass because of their alienation from Najdi Wahhabism.[156]

Hussein's military victories in themselves encouraged cohesion, through the bedouin's rapid loyalty transfer process. The Hashemite expedition in 1917 to take Aqaba included 800 Towaila bedouin, 200 Sharat and 90 Kawashiba, 4,000 Bani Atiyah and the Abu Tayi of the Howaitat.[157] Success at Aqaba encouraged other tribes to enlist in the push towards Syria:[158] the Ibn Jazi Howaitat; Bani Sakhr; the Juhaina; Utaiba and Unaiza. At this time when British officials began to doubt Hussein's leadership abilities because of his temperamental outbursts and demands for immediate, extended power, his victories accelerated tribal support. These social groups did not react to his rule on abstract spiritual grounds, but on his ability to provide material fruits of subsidy and victory. Captain Bray's interpretation drew attention to the great achievement of Hussein and his sons in converting hostile elements and uniting discordant individuals and tribes: "In a few short months centuries of dissensions have been bridged and, in spite of local enmities, not a single shot has – so far as we know – been fired by any tribesman against the Sherif's forces."[159] Lawrence also noted that Hussein's popularity was increasing:

> the Sherif is generally regarded with great pride, and almost veneration, as an Arab sultan of immense wealth and Feisal as his War Lord . . . this is the fattest time the tribes have ever known, nothing else would have maintained a nomad force for five months in the field.[160]

155 *Arab Bulletin*. No. 41, 6 February 1917 and R. L. Coleman, "Revolt in Arabia 1916–1919: conflict and coalition in a tribal political system" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1976) pp. 208–10; hereinafter cited as Coleman.

156 Among the forces rallied at Rabigh in November 1916 were 535 Ugailis (*Arab Bulletin*, No. 32, 26 November 1916).

157 Lowell Thomas, *With Lawrence in Arabia* (London, Hutchinson, 1935), pp. 82–8; hereinafter cited as Thomas.

158 al-Sibai', p. 614.

159 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 41, 6 February 1917 and Coleman, pp. 208–10.

160 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 31, 18 November 1916.

For instance, when Aqaba was captured, Hussein distributed English money to the bedouin. Thus Hussein's authority depended on "economic loyalty", which differed from other mercenary soldiering systems in that economic exchange between ruler and ruled was rhetorically objectified by the pretext of an ideological affinity.

So although Hussein seemed to have attracted cohesive coercive support, this was in fact illusory and created by foreign subsidies and *maslaha*. It was also, as shall be seen, eroded by factional norms. While tribes traditionally served as the military force of the sharifate,[161] the sharif did not "speak to them in a language they could understand. His state lacked force . . . His only choice since he lacked an army was to be lenient with the bedu and to pay them in order to secure the routes."[162] A key feature of Hussein's coercion in this period is that his leadership strategies were dictated by a lack of genuine intrinsic coercive capacity. This made him dependent on foreign support and thrust him into the arms and ideologies of Britain and Syrian nationalists. Hussein's extreme dependence on external support proved destructive because it switched his political focus away from his indigenous power base which was the essential basis of his sovereignty.

The *Arab Bulletin* noted that Hussein had obtained 1,000 volunteers in the first three days of the revolt.[163] But the numbers did not continue to swell for, six months later, in November 1916, the Hijazi army was estimated at only 20,000 men.[164] Moreover, the supply of weapons was always uncertain. For instance in August 1916 Faisal told Wilson that a major retreat from Medina "was solely due to want of arms".[165] However, Faisal supposedly received 7,000 British rifles in the first month alone.[166] Hussein's troops were not a well-armed, cohesive professional standing army. Hussein was used to indigenous military traditions and his external military advisors largely advocated guerrilla warfare techniques.

161 M. Amin Tawfiq, *Tarikh ashraf al-Hijaz 1840–1888* (a study of Ahmad Zeini Dahlan's *Khulasat al-kalam fi bayan umara' al-balad al-haram*) (London, Saqi Books, 1993), pp. 41–2.
162 Nasif, p. 100.
163 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 13, August 1916.
164 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 32, 26 November 1916.
165 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 20, 14 September 1916.
166 *Arab Bulletin*, "Hedjaz News", 1 August 1916, Vol. 1.

Co-ordination of military operations was assigned to Aziz al-Masri, an Egyptian officer, and subsequently to Jaafar al-Askari, an Iraqi.

Hussein also experienced difficulties in preserving the cohesion of his warrior groups, since tribal allegiances were based on complex factors. For example, the Howaitat were led by the legendary Awda Abu Tayi, whose ability to direct his forces aggressively against the Ottomans was a strong factor in Hussein's success; but the Howaitat's power structure was particularly prone to fragmentation for the head sheikh ultimately possessed little control. Military operations were disrupted by such internal tribal dissent and could only be resumed when all disputes had been settled,[167] and a feud broke up the Howaitat into discordant sections with one leader joining the Ottomans while Sulaiman Abu Tayi and Awda Abu Tayi aligned with Faisal.[168] At Faisal's request, Awda Abu Tayi made peace with his sworn enemies, and Faisal ruled that his followers must have no feuds except with Ottoman-aligned Al Rashid loyalists. Faisal's success through the socially-accepted custom of arbitration helped him to sustain sharifian cohesion against tribal jealousies. The Hashemites did not always succeed in exploiting the arbitration tradition to sustain control however: the ruler of Khurma, Khalid ibn Lu'ay, dropped out of the revolt in the summer of 1917 because he was dissatisfied with Abdallah's adjudication of his quarrel with another sheikh.[169]

The numerous tribes which supported Hussein were not trained in modern warfare and weaponry (many accounts exist of their fleeing from artillery fire).[170] Tribal loyalties in war were ephemeral, and the bedouin, useful for forays on their own ground, did not stand firmly during organised expeditions. Moreover the forces were in a constant state of flux, as families reclaimed sons and sent out fresh recruits. Sometimes a whole clan got tired and took a rest.[171] Thus when problems arose after the early successes of the revolt, for example when the Medina siege

167 "Twelve cases of assault with weapons, four camel thefts, one marriage settlement, fourteen feuds" (Thomas, p. 132).

168 Wilson to McMahon, Despatch No. 14, Jeddah, 5 November 1916, L/P&S/10/637.

169 Goldrup, *Saudi Arabia*, pp. 309–10; see also Amin Sa'id, *Tarikh al-dawla al-saudiyya* (Beirut, Dar al-Kitab al-'Arabi, 1964), pp. 81–2.

170 Thomas, p. 129.

171 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 32, 26 November 1916.

proved hard to break, Hussein began to look outside his coercive groups for more resolute professional soldiers:

> The Sherif now sees that he cannot hope to take [Medina] with his Bedouin levies alone and becomes more and more insistent in his requests for trained troops, guns and aeroplanes, has withdrawn his objection to Christian aviators flying in Hedjaz, outside the sacred precincts of Mecca and Medina.[172]

In this connection the earlier promise of Syrian military assistance must be considered, since this had been crucial in influencing Hussein to instigate the revolt. The absence of a parallel uprising in Syria suggests that the Syrian support was never a convincing basis of revolt. However, Tauber's research shows that the Syrians actually had a convincing support base: significant Syrian sections of the Ottoman army were prepared to rise up against the Ottomans. The latter, unfortunately learning this, deliberately transferred Arab nationalist units to war fronts where they suffered extensive casualties and, further, executed the entire Damascene nationalist leadership.[173] Hussein commented on this to McMahon in February 1916: "the tyrannies of the Government there have not left of the persons upon whom they could depend, whether of the different ranks of soldiers or of others, save only a few, and those of secondary importance".[174] Hussein did receive some help in the revolt, however, from Arab officers captured from the Ottoman army, mainly from Syria and Iraq, such as Nuri al-Said, who later became prominent in Arab politics, and Jaafar al-Askari.

Hussein's increasing dependence on outside military support (he had an Egyptian artillery unit) was exacerbated by his chaotic military leadership – where his personal conduct and inept strategic handling of the revolt substantially contributed to his subsequent fall. Increasingly unstable leadership, lack of military acumen and poor administration damaged his credibility with Britain, his society and neighbours. For instance he formed a battle plan only for his initial attacks on the Ottomans,[175] with

172 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 13, 1 August 1916.
173 Tauber, p. 61.
174 L/P&S/10/526, No. 18.
175 Faisal would attack Medina; Hussein would attack Mecca; Abdallah would attack Taif, and his nephew would attack Jeddah (Secret, Arabian Report, No. XIXA, L/P&S/10/583).

the result that the revolt enjoyed early successes, particularly in taking Mecca and Taif. However, by late 1916 when Faisal met Colonel Wilson at Yenbo, he criticised his father for starting the revolt too early, before substantial British armaments had arrived, because this caused committed tribes to drift away. Hussein's failure to realise the seriousness of the arms situation, Faisal claimed, had caused the disastrous first retreat from Medina, a difficult target with a large, resistant Turkish population. Furthermore, Hussein failed to cultivate useful military support in Asir and alienated al-Idrisi, who was still smarting from Hussein's campaign in 1911;[176] thus when in 1916 al-Idrisi prepared to seize the Red Sea port of al-Qunfida from the Ottomans after a long siege, Hussein deployed his forces for the same purpose.

Hussein's uncertain function as "head of the revolt" became a major problem for his authority. Although he was the legitimising figurehead, whose traditional dynastic authority attracted support, the actual military campaigns were commanded by his sons. After Taif fell, it was Ali, Faisal and Zaid who met to plan a more effective strategy,[177] while rallying the tribes was delegated to Abdallah. Because of his age, Hussein could not describe himself as leading from the front.[178] The delegation of coercive tasks did not in theory undermine his authority, given the traditional-dynastic cultural ethos, whereby sons acted for the glory of their father and family. Nonetheless, his sons began to accumulate individual prestige while Hussein lost touch with military events. This resulted in communication failures: for instance, Faisal could not break the siege of Medina because he lacked explosives yet learned that Hussein himself had refused to allow dynamite to be landed at Jeddah: "My father tries to do everything but is not a soldier."[179]

However, in other respects Hussein did not delegate enough responsibility and, with poor timing, took back the power from his sons,

176 Coleman, pp. 387–94. See also Joseph Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 44; hereinafter cited as Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia.*

177 "Hitherto the action of the brothers has been lacking in real plans of co-operation." (*Arab Bulletin,* No. 24, 5 October 1916.)

178 See "Captain Shakespear to the political resident", 19 January 1915, *Arab Bulletin,* No. 25, 7 October 1916.

179 *Arab Bulletin,* No. 20, 14 September 1916.

thus undermining their campaigns, his image and popular support. A prime example of this was in August 1918 when Hussein objected to Faisal appointing Jaafar Pasha as the northern army commander-in-chief and refused to recognise him. T. E. Lawrence encouraged Hussein to apologise for insulting Faisal but he refused and Faisal resigned, whereupon Hussein wired him, "May God forgive you for bringing this load upon your father."[180] Zaid, when told to take over, could not handle the task, and begged Abdallah "to obtain approval to come here immediately to take over command as I am unable to perform duties of Army Command".[181] Faisal's resignation demoralised the bedouin to the point where Zaid despaired and ordered all military actions to be stopped in August 1918. Britain, intercepting these wires, was appalled and pressured all parties to resolve their differences. Edmund Allenby, commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, urged Faisal to withdraw his resignation which threatened the destruction of Arab hopes: "You owe it to the Arab cause."[182]

Accordingly Faisal reassumed command, but once again Hussein's refusal to confirm the status of key officers created a crisis and the Aqaba commander reported a mutiny among the artillery. Hussein's petulance in labelling Faisal a rebel and traitor had undermined Faisal's command,[183] yet despite urgent British reminders of Faisal's importance as military co-ordinator, Hussein refused to back down. After being reminded that the supreme military command lay with Allenby and not himself, Hussein backed down completely.[184] In military matters Hussein vacillated uncertainly between figurehead and autocrat. His interventions in his sons' military strategies detracted from the revolt's prestige, provoking impatience and hostility among tribes who followed his sons. Thus, in the thick of the revolt, Hussein made poor use of his dynastic authority and executive power.

One of Hussein's motivations in instigating the revolt was to make use of Britain's capacity for coercive force to extend his power. Britain contributed most effectively through provision of subsidies, munitions

180 See paraphrase of telegram, 30 August 1918, FO 141/437/7566.
181 Zaid to Abdallah, 30 August 1918, FO 141/437/7566.
182 See "commander-in-chief to Feysal", 30 August 1918, FO 141/437/7566.
183 Commandant, Aqaba, to British agent, Jeddah, 3 September 1918, FO 141/437.
184 Hussein implored, "Oh Faisal, in spite of your not having written me . . . yet I do write this to you . . ." (FO 141/437.)

and expert military advice. However, while Hussein received an initial shipment of 2,500 English rifles, these did not suffice against 10,000 Ottoman regulars,[185] and often arms arrived too late to be effective, so that Ali and Faisal "began to think that the British government . . . had forgotten all about the Medina operations".[186] Six months later it was claimed that 18,000 rifles and 11 million rounds of ammunition had been sent to the Hijaz.[187]

Britain's practical technical assistance included: naval bombardment of ports in support of land operations; coastal transportation of supplies; seaplanes used for bombing or reconnaissance;[188] and secure bases for modern communications' systems.[189] The most effective coercive contribution came from the British military advisors who trained the inexperienced Hashemites in guerrilla warfare tactics such as rail sabotage which prevented the re-supplying of Ottoman forces. However, the guerrilla warfare experience which Hashemite forces gained did not foster long-term military cohesion, did not increase their social and ideological cohesion through training in a disciplined military system, and did not develop a unified army for guarding a new nation state. This worked against Hussein in the long term: "Hijaz is the corner of Arabia that should have been the strongest and most populated with soldiers . . . [yet] Hijazi soldiers are the fewest among all nations of the world, the weakest hearts of all and the most ignorant of war affairs."[190]

Military loyalty cannot be created without indigenous social cohesion unless common interests unite the social segments. Hussein did not transform tribal coalitions acting under a makeshift nationalist ideology into a sustained military, social or ideological cohesive unit. By late 1917 officials in Cairo expressed strong doubts about his capabilities as a future pan-Arab leader, "that he has hitherto failed to exploit Arabian animosity towards the Turks to secure common action by the

185 See *Arab Bulletin*, No. 20 of 14 September 1916.

186 *Ibid.*

187 "War material supplied to Sherif [at September 1916] – 18,000 rifles – 11,000,000 rounds of small arms ammunition – complete equipment for 1 Battalion of men and seven officers – 1 Egyptian Field Army Hospital, complete with stores. They planned to supply another 20,000 rifles and heavy arms" (CAB 17/176, meeting of 13 November).

188 The *Euryleus* used seaplanes for scouting and gun-spotting off Yenbo.

189 Thomas, p. 129.

190 Nasif, pp. 198–9.

Peninsula Chiefs augurs ill for the success of his more ambitious schemes".[191] Hussein's coercive arm was thus a decaying instrument of control, which could expel the Ottomans but could not provide sustained security, let alone a pan-nationalist kingdom. The munitions which he provided to the tribes made them more independent of his control in the long term, and acceptance of so much military aid robbed Hussein of independent influence and eroded his personal prestige.

Hussein's inability to retain the means of coercion in his own hands, and the liquidity of his social support base, as much as any ephemeral quality of British support or ambiguous British guarantees, destroyed his leadership and his claims to broader power. In addition to the deficiencies of his military leadership, his authority was also undermined by his poor administration in Hijaz, his proposed claim to the caliphate and refusal to ratify the Anglo-Hashemite treaty. These defects of rule, which intensified later, are described below.

From amir to king: Hussein's new claims to authority

It was during the turbulence of the revolt that Hussein abruptly asserted his right to be "King of All Arabs". In October 1916 the ulema in Mecca declared him "King of the Arab nation, and religious chief until the Muslims are of one opinion concerning the Islamic Caliphate".[192] Abdallah dispatched a telegram announcing Hussein's title, which dwelt on the evils of the CUP.[193] Before this Hussein was undecided whether to call himself "King of All Arabs", or "King of Hijaz".[194] Assumption of kingship was a pivotal strategy of his wartime administration, affecting his future authority. One alleged motive was that he wished to "leave a title of independent Kingship to his heir as a stepping-stone to the Caliphate" which he wished to be vested in his own family.[195] Also, he obviously wished to make the most of the opportunity to extend

191 See note by Cairo residency, 23 December 1917, CAB/27/23.
192 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 29, 8 November 1916.
193 See Urgent No. 946, translating Abdallah's telegram, 31 October 1916, FO 371/2722.
194 Nasif, pp. 73–4.
195 Wilson to McMahon, Despatch No. 15, Jeddah, 11 November 1916, L/P&S/10/637.

power while he was under Britain's protection and his coercive force was strengthened.

Hussein nevertheless broke an important diplomatic rule in taking his major ally by surprise with this claim to increased power. The move increased British irritation and disenchantment with his performance. Wilson in Jeddah wired McMahon, "Shereef's action appears ill-advised and premature. Only previous indication given of intention of this nature was in course of conversation by Abdallah to Storrs who told Abdallah 'he could not even convey such a wild idea to higher authority'."[196] It is an established political fact that by suddenly claiming an entitlement to power a leader catalyses acceptance or rejection of him from allies. Hussein staged the pronouncement to force Britain, France and other powers to accept it as a *fait accompli.* This is shown in the way he manipulated an invitation to French delegates from a military mission to the announcement ceremony, hoping to imply French support for his claim. The French Muslim officers politely applauded his Arabic speech, "thinking they had congratulated the Sherif on the New Year . . . they found that the talk of the town was that they had congratulated the Sherif on becoming King in the name of the French Republic".[197] Hussein intended the event to show Hijazi independence from foreign intervention, but it clearly also showed his dependence on foreign opinion.

If he had refrained from this declaration diplomatic relations would have remained calmer at a critical point in the war. Instead, unwelcome issues surfaced which increased the pressures on Hussein's leadership. He had clearly claimed an authority that he did not yet possess, causing Wilson to express concern that "the Proclamation will be a subject for derision by many, as Medina and a large part of the Hedjaz is still held by the Turks".[198] Ironically, Hussein's claims began to expose the real limits of his international support, for while Britain was willing to recognise his de facto rule over the Hijaz, it was "unable to recognise the assumption by him of any sovereign title which might promote disunion among the Arabs".[199] Even the Arab Bureau considered Hussein's international support

196 McMahon to Wilson, 31 October 1916, FO 371/2782.

197 See Despatch No. 14, Wilson at Jeddah to McMahon, 5 November 1916, L/P&S/10/637.

198 Wilson to McMahon, 31 October 1916, Despatch No. 12, FO 371/2722.

199 See the Aden Report, 10 June 1916.

as not sufficiently secure to allow him to claim regional leadership. The foreign office concluded that his claim "made it difficult for him to accept Bin Saud, the Imam, the Idrisi, etc., who were his equals in fact, as his peers in honorary rank".[200] Furthermore, Hussein's new titular claim alienated regional leaders at a time when he still desperately needed their support. For instance, it offended Ibn Saud[201] and provoked him publicly to reject Hussein's authority over Najd. Thus Hussein's proclamation stimulated a formal limiting of his claims to authority.

Britain considered that his bid for kingship made the British position in the revolt more difficult since Britain needed a broad support base for wartime strategy. His claim risked pushing neutral or Islamic groups over to the Ottoman side. Britain did not need allies whose unreliable actions affected perceptions of its legitimacy. Hussein's claim could have "the most needless effects on Arab cause if published outside Hedjaz in Moslem countries where Shereef's action and motives are still regarded with distrust". Its publication must be "strictly confined to the Hedjaz".[202] Although relations with Britain did not suffer a setback immediately (Wilson defended Hussein's lack of courtesy as unintentional), Hussein's manœuvre cast doubts on his motives and tactical acumen. In attempting to justify his action to Wilson, Hussein threatened to abdicate three times, which suggested a mistaken overestimation of his importance, as well as an unstable temperament.

The Allied powers refused to acknowledge his claim (which asserted power over Aden, Yemen, Tunisa, Algeria, Najd, Iraq, Fez, and Egypt),[203] fearing that acceptance would acknowledge Hussein's tacit sovereignty over their Arab colonies. They therefore sought an alternative title to reflect his specific authority, which would be acceptable to other political groups. Those considered and rejected included "His Majesty the Sheriff", "Malik-el-Haramein" ("King of the Holy Places", a French suggestion); "King of the Arabs in the Hejaz and its dependencies". Cox recommended, as a combined temporal and spiritual title, "Sultan-el-Hejaz Hamil-el-Haramein" ("Sultan of the Hijaz and Protector of the Holy Places").[204]

200 Wilson to McMahon, Jeddah, 31 October 1916, Despatch No. 12, FO 371/2722.
201 Nasif, p. 74.
202 Wilson to McMahon, 31 October 1916, Despatch No. 12, FO 371/2722.
203 Nasif, pp. 73–4.
204 India Office Note of 14 November 1918, L/P&S/10/637.

Hussein's assertion that he ruled all Arab territories also jeopardised British diplomatic relations with France which had Arab territorial interests. The India Office stressed that Hussein had no suzerainty over other Arab chiefs, hoping somehow to make his announcement palatable "throughout Mesopotamia".[205] Britain informed its allies that consultations would be undertaken "on the question of a joint official recognition of His Highness's new position", but reminded the Italians that Hussein's move was premature since the Ottomans had not been routed.[206]

During these consultations Wilson, in Jeddah, after weighing up Hussein's motives, took his side: "I, personally am in favour of His Majesty's Government giving the Sherif the fullest official recognition that may be found possible."[207] But the foreign office, which supported Hussein, could not secure him such recognition. The conflict over his title did not end there; Hussein made several attempts to enforce it, arguing that it would bring added authority to his commands, but Wilson was firm: "I quite understand your reasons for signing 'King of the Arab Countries' and Your Highness quite understands why I address you as 'King of the Hedjaz'."[208] When asked about titles in 1917 by Wilson and Lawrence, Hussein stated definitely that he was not simply "Amir al-Muminin": "It was no use being Emir, without the power or pretence of giving orders not to a sect or a country or two, but to the Moslem world."[209] Lawrence disagreed with Hussein's interpretations of the title "Amir al-Muminin", insisting that Hussein's interpretation did "not hold good".[210] Ultimately, Britain decided to grant him limited recognition as "King of the Hijaz".

In conclusion it can be said that Hussein's assumption of the title was a tactical attempt to grasp authority under the impetus of the revolt, but this attempt only attracted more aggression from rivals and diminished his major ally's confidence in him. Hussein's claim to the

205 *Ibid.*

206 See telegram to the Italian ambassador, No. W 220832/16, FO 371/2782.

207 Wilson to McMahon, Despatch No. 14, Jeddah, 5 November 1916, L/P&S/10/637.

208 Wilson to HH King Hussein ibn Ali, Grand Sharif and Emir of Mecca, 20 June 1918, FO 141/679.

209 See "note on conversation with the Sheriff written by Captain Lawrence", Jeddah to Arab Bureau, 31 July 1917, FO 686/8.

210 *Ibid.*

kingship later made him look foolish when the Sykes–Picot Agreement demonstrated that French wishes regarding Syria would prevail despite Hussein's support from groups there, which thus undermined Hussein's position and dignity as a leader.

From then on the temperamental nature of Hussein's leadership intensified, perhaps because of his disillusionment following the revelations about the Sykes–Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Others, however, such as the Hijaz under-secretary for foreign affairs, Sheikh Fuad al-Khatib, believed that Hussein's psychological change derived from positive hopes of extending his authority, because he thought he would be "Lord of all Arabia except Aden and Basra". Wilson noted "a change in the Sherif's manner" towards him after the Sykes–Picot mission left Jeddah. "I should not be surprised if this Mission helped to turn his head," he noted, stressing this as an "entirely new development in his character". Hussein exhibited a new stubbornness and tendency to take every decision himself concerning the revolt. An official report by Wilson in July 1917 stated: "he appears to have developed Megalomania to a considerable extent".[211] As Hussein's domineering tendencies increased, Hijazi society began to fear any future regime that he might administer, and began to withdraw its support.

Hussein's diminishing authority with his society

As the world war drew to a close, it became evident that Hussein did not have the qualities necessary to create an independent cohesive Arabia. This would require "an amazing combination of diplomacy, force and promise of material advantage".[212] To sustain social cohesion on a regional scale would require the economic resources of a larger, evolved state, and Hussein could not sustain military payments independently or indefinitely; his personal revenue from tributes was not sufficient. Use

211 Reported by Wilson in "Present Government of the Hedjaz and the Grand Sherif's Relations with Arab Chiefs" on 10 July 1917 (FO 141/813/3551). Instances of Hussein's new character include: his annoyance at having to go to Jeddah to meet only Bray and Wilson to be thanked for his aid; and his comment on being quizzed about missing supplies when he wrote to the high commissioner about 1,000 missing bags of flour: "I hope I am worth more than 1,000 bags of gold to Great Britain." (Hussein to high commissioner, 17 April 1917, FO 141/757/5276.)

212 See note by Cairo residency staff, 23 December 1917, CAB 27/23.

of British finance brought only short-term social allegiance, not the enduring loyalty, for instance, which the Shammar demonstrated to the Al Rashid. Hussein's failure to reserve some subsidies and arms shows he lacked the analytical foresight to foster long-term sources of societal consent.

The period following the instigation of the revolt was a turning-point in Hussein's relations with his society. Hussein's claim to be "King of All Arabs" distanced him from his society's concept of rule, for this title had no precedent in Hijaz, was not a tradition, and had not been decided through consultation with any of the groups over which he abruptly claimed authority. It was a cultural mystery:

> by no means all the Arabs and Arab leaders in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire were in favour of being ruled by Sharif Husain of Mecca. Nor were they all united as to their understanding of Arab independence or the ultimate form of Government in Arab lands.[213]

A leader must propose a model of government which appeals to those obeying him. Hussein's proclamation, however, disregarded social consensus. Weber's comments on traditional models of rule such as Hussein's predict that the society's hostile reactions to the ruler's digressions from norms would be focused upon the ruler's specific person, rather than on his system of rule.[214] In contrast, Ibn Saud's innovative technique for acquiring power was to create a separate entity: in the Ikhwan he could point to a social body with consensual motivation.

In comparison, Hussein seems to have had a poor understanding of the art of social persuasion. After he proclaimed himself king, he and Abdallah manipulated the response of the townspeople, forcing congratulations and celebrations. Wilson wrote: "all the great merchants [of Jeddah] have decorated their houses and exchanged visits"; however, he added, "it seems that the people in Jeddah are not pleased with the Sheriff declaring himself King [of all Arabs]".[215] This suggests that the Hijazi

213 Zeine, pp. 135–7.

214 "Resistance . . . is directed against the person of the chief . . . Opposition is not directed against the system as such." (Weber, p. 342.)

215 "By the end of the Great War the loyalty of the Utaiba and Harb had diminished almost completely." (Col. Wilson, Jeddah, to director of the Arab Bureau in Cairo on 11 February 1919, FO/686/10.)

population had not really supported the revolt as part of any pan-Arab nationalist agenda.

Another concern of the Hijazis was that their state should be administered effectively, for they rejected the Ottomans' slothful and aggressive administration. Despite this, Hussein did not truly reorganise his power structure in a substantially improved manner. He made superficial changes to the civil structure,[216] and created: a police system; ministries for foreign affairs, the interior and finance; an education administration and a council of deputies presided over by a chief judge. However, such new structures were nominal and no more than token adjustments.[217] Merchants in particular remained sceptical about his changes. Because of their role in the socio-economic structure of the towns they played an important part in decreasing Hussein's authority. Merchants had a practical interest in the smooth administration of a stable economy and British intelligence claimed early in the revolt that in Jeddah the majority were "strongly anti-Sherif" and "refused the rebels entrance into the city".[218] Beyond Hijaz, Aden merchants predicted that Hussein's regime would be worse than that of the Turks and were concerned about its effect on trade.[219]

Hussein followed a determined policy of economic isolationism, which failed to satisfy mercantile needs. He adhered strongly to a policy of protectionism, to retain his traditional political control by economic means. One of his reasons for fighting against the extension to the Hijaz railway, for instance, was that it would destroy the traditional economy. He argued that, without the development of quays at Jeddah, and mining and other industries in the interior, this extension would mean the economic death of the camel-owning population of Arabia. Yet when

216 Under Hussein's governmental changes Ali became chief of deputies, Faisal became chief of the interior and Abdallah became deputy of foreign affairs. Abdalla Siraj was appointed deputy to Ali, judge of judges; Ahmad Banaja was appointed deputy for education, Ali Malki deputy for finance, and Said Amin Qutbi deputy for al-Awqaf. Hussein created a police administration and four municipalities, added a senate of sheikhs to the pre-existing legislative court, issued new Hashemite stamps and riyals and started a small military school (Rafi', p. 260 and al-Sibai', p. 614).

217 Rafi', p. 184.

218 See Arabian Report No. XXIIA, 15 July 1916, L/P&S/10/586.

219 See Arab Bureau Intelligence Summary No. 11, 17 July 1916, Vol. I, *Arab Bulletin*, The Aden Report, 10 June 1916.

Hijaz groups, including camel-owning tribesmen, proposed their own economic innovation, a car-service company between Jeddah and Mecca, Hussein vetoed it. To Hussein's surprise at least 70 per cent of those who planned to become drivers came from the Harb and other bedouin tribes who were keen to change from traditional to modern economic practices.

Hussein did not favour such changes which might have forged a new social link between merchants and migrant groups which would limit his authority. He therefore prevented the enterprise on the pretext that it would diminish the economic revenue of camel owners and bedouin. His real interest, however, was to safeguard his control over the traditional economy of the state, its operation and income from the pilgrimage. Hussein's neglect of his society's economic interests prevented certain development projects:[220] in 1912 some Syrians wanted to build an ice factory and flour mill but were prevented; Indian residents petitioned to open a soft drinks' factory, but Hussein replied that there was *zam zam* – water. Hussein seems to have believed that if he opened up the Hijaz economy he would lose control. He wanted to establish only the outward form of a Western nation state, rather than the practical substance of such consensual government. Yet economic isolationism was illogical, given the ethnic flux and variety of Hijaz, one of the world's most visited religious centres. Thus dissatisfaction grew among the townspeople and educated classes and some actually left Hijaz.

In his relations with the tribes, Hussein's intensive exploitation of their relative loyalty during the revolt eroded his authority in the long term. It was beyond Hussein's capabilities to unite the tribes on the strength of his personal character alone: he lacked Ibn Saud's charismatic daring leadership and shrewdness. Only in wartime circumstances could he rally society.

Thus, while Ibn Saud reserved his foreign subsidies and sustained the zeal of his society for later military action in his own interests,

220 al-Sibai', p. 619. There was also a scheme for the commercial development of the Mecca valley in November 1916 (FO 371/2783). Al-Sibai' says Hussein refused permission for foreign companies to prospect for oil, and for some Syrians who also wanted to install a Mecca–Jeddah railway. However, in 1919 Harry S. Garrood wrote to the Arab Bureau regarding an exploration concession from Hussein: "The concession grants me sole rights . . . to prospect . . . it is proposed to make a start early in October from El Wejh." (FO 141/583.)

Hussein squandered cash-based tribal loyalties in a conflict which served a short-term British strategy. Further, during the revolt he sometimes displeased tribes with ill-advised attempts to control the bedouin without providing financial incentives, an innovation for which there was no traditional or social support. "His lack of understanding with the bedu affected his life, his position and his *mulk*. Because they remained he made them his enemy and so when the Najdis approached Hijaz, the Utaiba and Harb went over to the Najdis."[221] Thus, although his state needed a continuous and permanent defence force, he alienated the social sections that formed his coercive arm. The tribes accepted wartime incentives, but were no more loyal to Hussein at the end of the revolt than on his arrival in Hijaz.

Since he had thus exhausted his "economy of loyalty", he might have hoped for support from regional leaders with stronger tribal links who had sent him insubstantial letters of support when the revolt began. Instead, his mishandling of other Arab chiefs only diminished his authority further, and by 1917 any hopes he might have cherished of the loyalties of regional peers was ending.[222] Hussein claimed to be "King of All Arabs", yet Ibn Saud made it clear that he did not trust Hussein and was "determined never to tolerate within his boundaries . . ." any control or interference on the part of the latter,[223] while Britain urged Hussein to send delegates to both al-Idrisi and Ibn Saud. However, Hussein responded that al-Idrisi had already offered him allegiance and that he had already extended friendship to Ibn Saud by sending his son to help against Ibn Rashid in 1915. Thus it was beyond British diplomatic efforts to create a mutual trust.

Even when disturbing rumours reached Hijaz that Ibn Saud was developing a threatening new coercive arm (the Ikhwan), Hussein continued to alienate Ibn Saud by trying to buy the loyalty of Najdi tribes and through an insulting letter which nearly finished their outward entente. Ibn Saud had written to Hussein requesting a loan of £6,000,

221 Nasif, p. 100.

222 "By the end of the Great War the loyalty of the Utaiba and Harb had diminished almost completely." (Col. Wilson, Jeddah, to Director, Arab Bureau, 11 February 1919, FO 686/10.)

223 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 25, 7 October 1916, enclosing extract from letter by Capt W. H. I. Shakespear of 19 January 1915.

"until we get rid of the prevailing crisis";[224] and asked Hussein not to interfere in Najd affairs. Hussein sent £2,000 and commented, "your observations . . . can only emanate from a man bereft of reason . . ."[225]

Britain perceived more clearly than Hussein that such antagonism was subverting his aim of becoming paramount chief. At the Kuwait Durbar (in November 1916) the foreign office put pressure on him to be more conciliatory; he thus telegraphed Ibn Saud apologising for past insults and blamed these on pressures of war.[226] However, the damage had been done and his mistake was to overestimate Britain's political will to protect him from other leaders, believing that British diplomatic and coercive ability must compensate for his inadequacies, administrative difficulties and unpopularity. Undoubtedly, overestimating his British support made Hussein display a contempt for other Arabian leaders. Clearly, the British alliance had shifted his ideological focus away from his religious authority over the Holy Places and amirate and distracted him from the need to cater for the interests of groups and peers who were under intense economic and political pressure.

Postwar British administrative changes and their effect on Hussein's authority

While Hussein's contribution was crucial to British strategy in the middle of World War I, as early as 1917 the British high commission in Cairo realised that British policy with regard to the revolt must be re-evaluated. With the redefinition of Britain's shifting interests in the Arabian peninsula, a suitable postwar policy emerged which included ensuring:

a. the security of the annual Pilgrimage
b. the immunity of the Peninsula from Foreign occupation, or penetration beyond the terms of agreement [i.e. the Sykes–Picot Agreement of 1916] . . .
c. the preservation of peace and the promotion of trading facilities on the borders of autonomous Arabia and the outlying settlements (e.g. Aden) and the regions under . . . [British] control.

224 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 29, 8 November 1917.
225 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 33, 4 December 1916.
226 Troeller, p. 101.

Providing these interests were adequately safeguarded Britain "had no desire to intervene in the internal politics of the Peninsula".[227] In other words, Britain's diplomatic policy had reverted to what it was before the war: non-intervention in Arabia. In response, the war office recommended at this time formal negotiation with Hussein, "to give effect to control of the eastern littoral of the Red Sea". It also advocated "the desirability of retaining the Caliphate under British auspices", with perhaps Baghdad as the seat of the Caliphate.[228] In 1918 the foreign office re-organised its administration of Middle Eastern affairs. This was necessary because an independent state of Hijaz, which had full treaty relations with Britain, must be treated as a foreign country, not a dependency. Thus responsibility for the Hijaz was shifted to the new foreign office Eastern Department (mentioned in the *Foreign Office List* for 1921) which replaced the former Eastern and Egyptian Department.[229]

British Middle Eastern affairs' administration was not truly unified until 1920, when a separate Middle Eastern Department was set up to supervise the various conquered areas.[230] A Cabinet review, the Masterton–Smith Committee, addressed the wide-ranging difficulties of interdepartmental overlapping and duplication of effort, and the massive task of administering the newly mandated territories of Iraq, Mesopotamia and Palestine.[231] The committee decided, after representations from the foreign office and the India Office, among others, that the Colonial Office was best suited to handle the overall responsibility for the British mandated territories, and a new department was duly created within the Colonial Office in 1921 with responsibility for Middle Eastern relations. But within the foreign office there was also an Eastern Department which covered Hijaz affairs.

The committee also recommended that the Arabian littoral on the Persian Gulf should remain under the jurisdiction of the Government of

227 See note, residency, Cairo, 23 December 1917, CAB/27/23.

228 From secret note, war office, 6 July 1917: observations by the director of military intelligence on Sir Reginald's Wingate's Despatch No. 127 of 11 June, CAB 27/222.

229 There was also the Levant Consular Department, which was not a diplomatic department. British consular representation in Jeddah was channelled through the British ambassador in Constantinople, and correspondence and reports are located under "Turkey" in foreign office papers.

230 FO 141/436/7588, Confidential Print of 17 May 1920.

231 See report of the interdepartmental committee, 31 January 1921, L/P&S/11/93.

India for administrative and local matters only. This left British relations with Ibn Saud and Najd under the control of the Government of India, with the qualification "that the prior concurrence of the Colonial Office should be obtained by them to any measures of political significance".[232] Through such administrative reorganisations, the older, more powerful British administrative structures absorbed the responsibilities of the Arab Bureau, which became redundant at the end of the world war but did not officially close until 1920.

Once the urgent strategic demands of the world war had diminished, the rivalry between the foreign office and the Government of India Office over their conflicting support for two different protégés, Hussein and Ibn Saud, also abated. Thus the British administrative structures whose rivalry had been expressed in proposing separate candidates for power, could now, in the interests of peacetime security, focus on a single candidate. This meant that either Ibn Saud or Hussein would inevitably lose much of the considerable backing they had received in wartime. Thus the strategic readjustment of Britain's administrative structure became in itself a dynamic determining the outcome of these leaders' contest for authority in Arabia. The changes dismantled lobbies and dissolved departments within the structure, such as the Arab Bureau which had championed Hussein.

In this period Hussein failed to take account of the fact that British departmental schisms and rearrangements might crucially affect his authority and lead to its decline. He did not predict that the wishes of the strongest of those departments, especially the dominant requirements of the Government of India, would ultimately prevail over his support from the Arab Bureau. The Arab Bureau was wound down officially in September 1920.[233] By that time its duties had greatly exceeded its original mandate and it was then conducting quasi-governmental business on behalf of Hussein. Its closure left Hussein in an unstable position with regard to British support, and in an administrative vacuum although the British consul was re-established in the Hijaz as the first line of communication to the foreign office. The military effort of the revolt had dissipated the indigenous power and authority which he had established during the first period of his rule. The triumph of the Arab revolt was

232 *Ibid.*
233 FO 371/5596.

actually a political illusion since it really precipitated his downfall. When Britain scaled down its activity in Hijaz, Hussein was still as dependent on external coercive and financial support for his rule as he had been on his arrival in Hijaz from Constantinople.

Britain has often been accused of betraying the guarantees implict in the Hussein–McMahon correspondence regarding Hussein's future power. However, an examination of the correspondence and negotiations shows that, while Britain may have overstimulated his hopes, it did not betray guarantees and repeatedly told him that French interests in Syria would prevail. Rather, it was Hussein's own mismanagement of his governance in this period which fundamentally eroded his authority at home and abroad since his new focus on obtaining international authority led him to neglect the foundations of his power. The British alliance changed fundamentally his conception of the scope of his leadership, and since a leader's strategy derives from his perceptions of his authority, this distortion in Hussein's understanding proved damaging. In his defence, it can be said that many of his choices, while calculated, were reactions to forceful and contradictory external pressures, such as the Ottomans' plan to oust him, World War I, the Sykes–Picot Agreement and the Balfour Declaration.

Shifts in the form of Hussein's authority during this period show what can happen to a leader's authority when it is transformed from one form of political authority to another. Hussein moved away from the socially acceptable form of government, a traditional religious-political authority based on blood descent, to make a bid for pan-Arab leadership. Ironically it was his religious authority which then made him strategically indispensable to Britain, since he possessed the religious authority to challenge the Islamic Ottoman empire. However, since religious authority formed the essential basis of his "right" to a limited sovereignty over Hijaz, and his only true international power was his religious power of jihad, clearly he risked legitimacy in siding with Christians against the Islamic caliphate. This was especially perilous since Ottoman propaganda played on the theme that Islam was under attack.[234]

234 "In competing with the established state for the same ideological ground, *Al-Qibla* was led to stress the failures of the government in power and to equate those failures with a diminishing of Islam as a whole." (*Al-Qibla*, No. 10, 17 Dhu al-Qa'ada, 1915.)

Hussein's lack of a genuine coercive arm forced him to react tactically rather than to formulate policy independently from immediate circumstances. Thus he was forced to prosecute the strategies of Britain, even when these ultimately undermined his traditional authority. Although his ranks were swollen by mercenary tribes, Hussein did not organise this augmented power to his permanent advantage. By promoting family strife, he destabilised the dynastic power of his military command and failed to sustain the social-tribal military cohesion as a force loyal to him. Thus, he remained a leader without a personal military arm.

Critically, he also increasingly ignored the fact that social harmony was the effective basis of his rule, and did not sustain cohesion through the satisfaction of interests. His wartime economic practices were also decisive in diminishing his social support, given the declining pilgrimage revenues, the economic blockade and a new pattern of external financial assistance. His traditionalist, isolationist economic policies intensified his ideological conflict with society and clashed with the expansionism of his supposed pan-Arab nationalist agenda. The professed aspirations of the Syrians proved an ephemeral substitute for indigenous loyalty, and when he claimed titles or territories outside the comprehension or norms of his groups, he eroded his social foundations of rule. His proposed assumption of the caliphate also served to damage perceptions of his religious legitimacy.

In adopting a foreign agenda for power which offered him interim success, Hussein failed to gauge correctly the durability of British and Syrian support, and was neither shrewd enough nor realistic enough to negotiate a formal treaty. His technique to increase power had been, once again, to interpose himself as the political buffer between the Great Powers, yet in doing so he lost his grasp of his true sources of authority – religious, international and domestic. Not only was the Ottoman empire declining, but Hussein's judgment was also "waning, dying, even as a flickering lamp whose oil had run out".[235]

235 Cheetham Despatch, 13 December 1914, L/P&S/10/521.

4

The cohesion of Ibn Saud's authority 1914–19

This chapter concerns the extension of Ibn Saud's authority during World War I and the Arab revolt, the period between 1915 and 1918,[1] which presented substantial difficulties for his consolidation of power, but culminated successfully in his capture of Hail. Regional rivalries, with continuing tribal resistance to his cohesive expansion,[2] hindered him as he entered the international sphere of influence. Thus he lacked the military capacity to help Britain by effectively harrying the Ottoman-backed Al Rashid, which affected his prestige with his ally. Nor could he compete with the military assistance given to other regional leaders who had Ottoman help or British backing. The widespread use of financial incentives diverted social support away from Ibn Saud, so that during 1916 and 1917 certain towns in al-Qasim and sections of the Unaiza and Shammar defected to Hussein who offered better material rewards.[3] The vital issue for Ibn Saud in this crucial period was to find a way to reverse this social alienation.

Ibn Saud needed somehow to impose a central, controlling structure which would enable him to delegate military duties and expand his power internationally for, while he had no aspirations to broad international power, he needed to become a stronger international player to strengthen his internal governance and attract the assets of external assistance. He needed to channel the interests of the dominant Najdi tribes to execute his goals. But no extant social norm served this need, and thus some new norm or agency had to be established which would appeal to his society. To provide such societal incentives and sanctions, he found

1 The Ottoman armistice was signed in October 1918 and the Arab revolt effectively ended when the Ottomans negotiated their withdrawal from Yemen in December 1918. After this date, chieftains were once again free to continue their local rivalries.

2 The tribal ethos of "traditional instinctive resistance to any powerful hegemonic ruler was sufficient to unite other rulers against Ibn Saud". (Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, p. 48.)

3 CO 727/3.

resources in his traditional religion rather than in any alien concept of nationalism.

Until this period his leadership had been built out of his exemplary daring military chieftaincy. By its end, however, he and Hussein had to some extent reversed roles, for Ibn Saud began to use fully his religious leadership through the Wahhabi revival, while Hussein turned towards an agenda of nationalism. At this point, Ibn Saud had commitments to both major powers in World War I, but needed to keep his options open as long as the outcome of the war was uncertain. Instead of offering any substantial help to either side, he devoted his efforts to developing a strong independent military cohesive arm, the Ikhwan, which first made its mark as a cohesive fighting force at the battle of Jirab (1914) thereby "radically altering the balance of power in the peninsula".[4] At the same time he needed to prevent his new coercive force from endangering the image of his leadership and from presenting a threat to external rivals or allies which might dissipate his strength through decreased subsidies and support.

His strategies therefore needed to take into account the Great Powers' specific strategic focus on Najd. It was imperative for him to steer his policy between the Great Powers' alternating neglect and pressure in order to secure material advantages from both of them. The increased British wartime assistance to Ibn Saud also increased the likelihood that the Ottoman-backed Al Rashid, a strong military force, would attack Ibn Saud because of his British link. If the Ottomans won the war his rivals the Al Rashid would thrive and his power would be disastrously curbed; thus it was prudent to sustain some relations with the Ottomans, which involved compromising his commitment to British strategy. An additional dilemma was to avoid expending the valuable resources donated by Britain for campaigns that would destabilise his rule in Najd, but at the same time to adhere to the Anglo-Saudi treaty[5] and demonstrate his willingness to act as a useful wartime ally.

The challenges faced by Ibn Saud thus intensified under the short-term pressures of war and continuing tribal-political norms of constant

4 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 63.

5 Troeller, pp. 83–9. Under the Terms of Article 6 of the Treaty of 26 December 1915 he undertook to respect Great Britain's special relations with Persian Gulf states and to "refrain from all aggression on or interference with [them]"; see "treaty between Great Britain and 'Abd al-'Aziz b. 'Abd al-Rahman b. Faisal Al Sa'ud, 26 December 1915, ratified 18 July 1916" (L/P&S/10/387).

realignment. In his response, one of his skills was that, despite the short-term pressures, he maintained a consistent focus on long-term goals and on obtaining the decisive coercive force to realise them. By focusing on future goals, he survived a period of world upheaval and successfully consolidated his authority.

Ibn Saud's use of foreign relations to cement his political authority

Ibn Saud's strategy towards Britain derived completely from his fixed and independent concept of the limited hegemony he aimed to create; in this he differed from Hussein, whose concept of hegemony had become overambitious. Ibn Saud, although from a culture which rejected the European concept of a fixed, central hegemony,[6] understood that his rule had natural, indigenous limits, and his technique was to exploit British military resources to stabilise that hegemony. Britain's urgent wartime needs meant that its policy towards Ibn Saud now took on an increasingly persuasive quality, because in order to harry the Ottomans in Arabia, it wanted him to blockade the eastern trade routes supplying Ottoman forces in Hijaz.

However, at the outbreak of World War I Ibn Saud needed to enjoy the best of both diplomatic worlds, discreetly maintaining relations with both foreign powers. The treaty with Britain guaranteed that he would continue as the de facto power in Najd should Britain win the war, and his Turkish treaty had recognised him as the governor of Najd, but nevertheless dealt with him as a Turkish subject, while Britain recognised him as an independent ruler. To Britain, his strategic value arose from the fact that his territory of al-Hasa separated the Ottomans in lower Mesopotamia from the Trucial sheikhdoms,[7] and in the long term al-Hasa was vital to British security. Thus Britain would always strive to maintain friendly relations with the ruler of al-Hasa. Had Ibn Saud sided with the Ottomans,

6 "A centralised monopoly of power runs counter to all kinds of segmentary tribal social organisation in so far as a distinctiveness and a certain degree of autonomy are basic features of any tribe." (Bassam Tibi, "The simultaneity of the unsimultaneous: old tribes and imposed nation-states in the modern Middle East", *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, ed. Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1990), p. 130; hereinafter cited as Tibi.)

7 Arab Bureau memorandum, "Relations with Ibn Saud", B251, 12 January 1917, L/P&S/10/388.

Britain would presumably have maintained cordial relations with him. The negotiations for Ibn Saud's treaty with Britain began in 1914, although his proposed alterations to some clauses delayed its conclusion until December 1915. The treaty recognised him as independent ruler of Najd, al-Hasa, Qatif, Jubail, their dependencies and territories, with the title descending to his heir. In particular, it guaranteed assistance against foreign reprisals. The British treaty was invaluable in affirming his power and dynastic rights.

However, Ibn Saud realised that if the Ottomans won the war they would be less merciful than Britain if he had acted against them. This fact, as well as his fear of reprisals after his expulsion of the Ottomans from al-Hasa,[8] was one justification for his signing a secret Ottoman treaty in 1914 which assigned Najd to the Al Saud for life, "as long as they should remain loyal".[9] He could probably have remained as semi-autonomous governor of Najd in the event of Ottoman victory, if he abstained from contributing substantially to Britain's war effort. Despite Ibn Saud's dual obligations, he therefore refrained from providing military assistance to either side. His credible excuse for not participating was to point out the fragility of his own social support base. Nevertheless, Britain pressed Ibn Saud for his coercive participation, hoping he could create divisive unrest among tribes loyal to the Ottomans by cutting their commercial routes and draining the enemy's military energy through skirmishes.[10] But the intensification of tribal hostility which would have resulted, if Ibn Saud were to have blockaded eastern and northern supply routes, would have endangered his indigenous power, stimulating retaliation specifically against him by the Shammar, Al Rashid and Ajman.[11] Thus, if he acted in Britain's interests, he would undermine his own control.

Arms and social control

Since control over trade routes demonstrated a ruler's effective authority,

8 J. Marlowe, *The Persian Gulf in the Twentieth Century* (London, Cresset Press, 1962), p. 43.

9 Troeller, pp. 83–9.

10 Britain had blockaded Red Sea ports to prevent supplies from reaching Ottoman forces in Hijaz, therefore the Persian Gulf and overland routes were doubly important. See Kostiner, "The Hashemite 'Tribal Confederacy'", pp. 126–43.

11 The Kuwait–Hail smugglers' route had been essential to the Shammar and Ajman. Now, Ibn Saud's allies, the Mutair, looted the route in response to Britain's instructions to Ibn Saud. The Mutair helped Ibn Saud because Ibn Rashid had closed the Syrian routes to the Mutair, cutting off their horse trade with Syria.

early in this period Ibn Saud's seeming inability to exert such control affected his prestige. "The new situation posed unprecedented challenges to the Saudi chieftaincy. Its rudimentary structure was inept in coping and thus prone to change."[12] Britain overestimated his will – and ability – to police the routes, and his failure stimulated hostile accusations from Hussein that Ibn Saud was undermining the revolt: each leader accused the other of stealing British arms consignments.

A consistent scarcity of arms was Ibn Saud's major difficulty; after the unprecedented success of his pre-war expansion, he was finding it harder to sustain or intensify his coercive social control. British military aid was an obvious solution; he had already received some munitions indirectly through Mubarak of Kuwait, and in 1913 he asked through the Bahrain political agent to purchase 4,000 Martini rifles.[13] The political agent considered that this showed Ibn Saud's wish to cooperate with Britain in respect of arms: ". . . it would be advisable to encourage Bin Saud to obtain his arms in a legitimate manner".[14] While it was not enshrined in the treaty with Britain, Ibn Saud did receive assistance. For instance in 1915 he was given £20,000 and 1,000 rifles, although he used the money to clear debts. The British, hoping he would prevent Ibn Rashid from striking at Iraq, proposed "monthly assurances of £5,000 together with 3,000 rifles and ammunition and four machine guns". (Ibn Saud was to police the al-Qasim route with 4,000 men.[15]) The Government of India agreed to Cox's proposals on 7 December 1916; it agreed to the £5,000 monthly subsidy, but could offer only 1,000 M.L.M. rifles, and it was the Treasury which took the final decision in offering £5,000 for six months initially.[16]

Then, Mutairi raids and the blockade deprived the Ottoman-allied Shammar of British-controlled trade centres, and the Ajman had difficulty trading in Kuwait. Thus deprivation stimulated an Ajman–Shammar alliance to fight the Mutair.

12 Joseph Kostiner, "Transforming dualities: tribe and state formation in Saudi Arabia, *Tribes and State Formation in the Middle East*, ed. Philip S. Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1990), p. 228; hereinafter cited as Kostiner, "Tribe and state formation.

13 Major Trevor, political agent at Bahrain, to political resident, Bushire, 20 December 1913, L/P&S/10/385.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Sir Percy Cox to foreign department, Government of India, 26 November 1916, L/P&S/10/635.

16 L/P&S/10/635.

Hussein repeatedly stressed Ibn Saud's ineffective enforcement of the blockade in order to undermine his rival's political credibility with Britain. The Arab Bureau was well aware of this itself, noting how supplies had been leaking through from Kuwait to Hail and hence to Medina, and complained, "it is up to Ibn Sa'ud to control these caravans en route for Hail, in the Muteir country, even if they do not actually pass through his province of Qasim".[17] In the prolonged Medina siege of early 1917, only a war of attrition could bring about a Hashemite victory,[18] but because of Ibn Saud's weak blockade enforcement, supplies still reached Medina through al-Qasim. Crucially, in enforcing the blockade Ibn Saud was caught between Britain's interests and those of his own society, for the scarcity of supplies pushed prices up and made smuggling increasingly lucrative. The most flagrant contravention of the blockade came in September 1917 when 3,000 enemy camels passed through al-Qasim, sanctioned by Ibn Saud's eldest son, Turki.[19] Not surprisingly, Hussein again accused Ibn Saud of secretly aiding the Ottomans.[20] Ibn Saud's defence was that he lacked the coercive capacity to control the Qusmani merchants who were perpetuating such trade, an argument again aimed at pressurising Britain to supply arms.

The alliance with Ibn Saud provided Britain with little strategic benefit, while Ibn Saud profited through material assistance. As even Shuckburgh at the India Office noted in January 1918, "it cannot be said that we have had much return for our money". The Arab Bureau also criticised Ibn Saud's achievements in June 1917, asserting,

17 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 29, 19 January 1917.

18 *Najd Report*, 1913, L/P&S/10/2182, Pts. 9 and 10.

19 In defending Ibn Saud, Baghdad officials admitted that while it was possible that some Turkish funds had got through, "it must have been due to slackness or connivance of Ibn Saud's retainers in Qasim on whose complete loyalty he cannot depend". See Sir Percy Cox to Government of India, 28 September 1917, L/P&S/10/390. Over a year later, Philby scathingy alleged that the Hashemites were then smuggling British arms. These accusations were soundly refuted by Colonel Wilson, who noted that "the statistics given by Mr. Philby were based . . . on nothing better than a report from a Najdi emir reported by Ibn Sa'ud". (*Arab Bulletin*, No. 108, 11 January 1919.) In other words, all reports had a basis of truth but exaggeration arose from the need to damage rivals' reputations.

20 Sir H. Wingate to foreign office, 13 January 1918, reporting Hussein's views (L/P&S/10/389).

> [he] has contented himself with consolidating his power in Qasim, and if he has taken any further action against Ibn Rashid it has been limited to writing letters to try and detach chiefs, like Ajeimi Saadam; to inciting tribesmen to close the Hail–Medina roads . . . and possibly to stopping contraband to and from Kuwait in its passage through Qasim.[21]

Ibn Saud himself was realistic about his own limitations at this time and realised that he was in no position of power "to make a substantial military or moral contribution to the war against Turkey".[22] He therefore concentrated on improving his control by increasing support from his factious groups.

Coercion and the associated society: the Ikhwan movement

Support for Ibn Saud from his social groups increased greatly after the development of the Ikhwan movement, a considerable fighting force which derived from his astute and deliberate restructuring of his social groups and whose creation marked a turning-point in his strategy. The Ikhwan were an asset which he cultivated from 1914 to 1918 and held in reserve for the expansion of his postwar hegemony. Before considering the substantial problems Ibn Saud faced in achieving social cohesion, it is necessary to examine the genesis of the extraordinary religious revival movement of the Ikhwan, whose coercive capacity he generally concealed from his Great Power ally.

The creation of the Ikhwan as a fighting force was a crucial development in Ibn Saud's quest for power. It is important, therefore, to identify who the Ikhwan were, how they were organised, their relationship with the rest of Najdi society, and the manner of their interaction with other social groups – whether the society feared, resented or welcomed them, and how they related to the society and its traditional norms. It is also essential to consider the motives of Ibn Saud himself, for an issue central to Ibn Saud's stature as a leader is whether he consciously engineered

21 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 53, 14 June 1917.
22 Antonius, p. 162.

the movement's inception, or whether the movement influenced him or originated without his sanction. A review of any extant evidence of his original purpose in developing the Ikhwan is required and a consideration of his perception of the evolving movement as a political tool to be manipulated towards his leadership goals.

Ibn Saud's role in the origin of the Ikhwan movement

While Ibn Saud's conscious development of the Ikhwan revival from 1913 to 1918 has been well documented,[23] John Habib and Alexei Vassiliev have revived the early diplomatic speculation over whether he created the force or simply developed it to extend tribal control. Major H. R. P. Dickson (who was later Britain's political agent in Bahrain and Kuwait), argued that the Ikhwan movement was founded by an alim (pl. ulama) named Abd al-Karim al-Maghrabi who, as early as 1899, had come from the Muntafiq in Iraq and settled in al-Artawiyya.[24] Al-Maghrabi is elsewhere mentioned as an early influence, and it is considered possible that the creation of the Ikhwan did not originate with Ibn Saud but rather with the Qadi of Riyadh, Abdallah al-Sheikh and the Qadi of al-Hasa, Sheikh Isa.[25] However, another scholar dismisses the theory "that Ibn Saud did not form the Ikhwan with the intention of using them as a striking force to conquer the peninsula, and that this use of the Ikhwan came as an after-thought".[26] In support of this view, Philby's analysis in 1918[27] corresponds with information collected from such surviving Ikhwan personalities as Majid ibn Khathila of al-Ghat-Ghat, Muhammad al-Sahabi and the Dushan of al-Artawiyya, which confirms that "one man alone was responsible for the creation of the Ikhwan, and

23 Wahbah, "Wahhabism in Arabia: past and present", pp. 458–67; see also Alangari, M.A. dissertation; Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*; Helms; and Joseph Kostiner, "On instruments and their designers: the Ikhwan of Najd and the emergence of the Saudi state", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 21 (1985), pp. 298–323; hereinafter cited as Kostiner, "On instruments".

24 FO 882/21.

25 FO 371/4044 and Vassiliev, p. 270.

26 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 21.

27 Philby, "Report on the Operation of the Nejd Mission", 29 November 1918, Vol. 4144, Document No. 4370, p. 1.

ultimately for its downfall – Ibn Saud."[28] Dickson wrote in 1920 that Ibn Saud roared at him: "I am the Akhwan."[29] Given such evidence, it has been argued that Ibn Saud's origination of the Ikhwan to consolidate his power was the most significant factor in his rise to power: "his genius reflects itself in the creation of the Ikhwan movement, formed by preaching an Islamic revival among the Bedouin . . . the Ikhwan movement ultimately vindicated his vision of it as his principal instrument to unify the peninsula."[30] Finally, Joseph Kostiner supports the assertion that Ibn Saud himself had actually originated the movement claiming that this interpretation is, "better documented and more widely established and seems correct and acceptable."

> Ibn Saud probably initiated the Ikhwan's foundation with the intention of harnessing the destructive power of the bedouin tribes and bending them to his rule . . . In any case, the fact that Ikhwan groups participated in al-Ahsa's conquest in 1913 indicates that quite soon after the establishment of the first *hijra*, they were already active in Ibn Saud's service. The assumptions that Ibn Saud founded the Ikhwan and that they were in his military service should therefore be accepted.[31]

Despite these scholarly conclusions that Ibn Saud was the initiator of the movement, it might be argued that Ibn Saud's originating role was of less significance in the extension of his power than his astute realisation that the movement could be channelled to create an unprecedented confederation of certain dominant Najdi tribes which could serve his military and political needs, develop the *hujar* and incorporate traditional social norms within these new structures.

The Ikhwan and the reorganisation of the social structure

Ibn Saud's social restructuring through the Ikhwan movement improved his executive capacity and enabled "the evolution of the Saudi state",

28 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 40, quoting FO 371/4144.

29 See Despatch from Major H. R. P. Dickson, political agent, Bahrain, to the civil commissioner, Baghdad, 5 March 1920, FO 371/5062.

30 Other leaders had subdued the bedouin, or conquered Najd, but not via an Ikhwan force (Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, pp. 6–7).

31 Kostiner, "On Instruments", p. 299.

which "reflects an encounter between a traditional tribal society centred in Najd and the drastic changes in its environment".[32] He used the impetus of the new movement to alter patterns of nomadic life, insisting that "Islam is a sedentary religion,"[33] and settling the bedouin in *hujar*[34] communities to be intensively educated in Wahhabism by special preachers.[35] Such *hujar* marked a new differentiation of state attributes of Najdi government, and denote a departure from the previous chieftaincy phase. Thus, while Hussein was exploiting his important tribal alliances to breaking-point in the revolt, Ibn Saud showed an insight into his true basis of authority by nurturing a more sustained social support through proselytism and settlement.

A central question about the growth of the Ikhwan is whether there are any early indications of Ibn Saud's personal motivations, or intended political strategy, in developing the movement, and how aware he was that the revival offered him a specific and powerful political tool. What is known is that, after 1912, a new fraternity of Harb and Mutair settled in al-Artawiyya and that this was the prototype of the hundreds of communities which rapidly sprang up all over Najd.[36] Some scholars question the social distinctness and dominance of the Ikhwan,[37] viewing them merely as "a loosely organised group of warriors, coming under

32 *Ibid.*, p. 226.

33 Ahmed A. Shamekh, *Spatial Patterns of Bedouin Settlements in al-Qasim Region, Saudi Arabia* (Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1975), pp. 46–7.

34 "*Hujar* is the plural of *hijra* and *hijra* in the dictionary means leaving the abode among the unbelievers and moving to the realm of Islam." See al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, p. 261.

35 Ibn Saud "would send for the Shaikh and tell him in blunt terms that his tribe had no religion and that they were all 'juhl'. He next ordered the Shaikh to attend the local school of 'Ulama . . . there undergo a course of instruction in religion. At the same time half a dozen 'Ulama, attended by some genuinely fanatical Akhwan, such as Al Duwaish the Shaikh of the Mutair were sent off to the tribe itself. These held daily classes teaching the people all about Islam in its original simplicity." See Dickson, Report to the Civil Commissioner, FO 371/5062.

36 The second hijra, al-Ghat-Ghat, south-east of Riyadh, was comprised of Utaiba converts. The number of *hujar* (migrants) reached 153 (al-Zirikli, p. 70). See also appendix, p. 163 in Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*.

37 "The Ikhwan were neither the only nor even the most important unit among the Saudi forces, nor did they change the fighting forces' qualities." (Kostiner, "On Instruments", p. 300.)

the immediate direction of their leaders",[38] and identifying the Ikhwan specifically with certain tribes:[39] "there was no exclusive and distinct body of Ikhwan who confined themselves to *hujar*".[40] However, the most significant fact about three major early *hujar* was that their populations were mainly comprised of members of three dominant Najdi tribes. Within two years of its foundation in 1912, control of al-Artawiyya fell to Faisal al-Dawish, chief of the dominant Mutair tribe; Sultan ibn Bijad of the Utaiba ruled over the second *hijra* – al-Ghat-Ghat – from 1912; and Ibn Hithlain of the Ajman presided over the al-Hasa *hijra*. Therefore, the evidence that Ibn Saud personally generated the Wahhabi revival is countered by the fact that these *hujar* suggest that the early Ikhwan movement essentially represented a dynamic religious confederation of three major tribes which had long dominated Najd and challenged Ibn Saud's quest for cohesive power.[41] Such evidence suggests that the major tribal influences were forming this confederated movement independently of Ibn Saud; that he then responded quickly, and astutely managed to gain control over these three tribes and the revival by exploiting his traditional role as a Wahhabi imam and mediator through a new and intense process of religious indoctrination.[42] Clearly, large-scale tribal structures and identities remained intact within these early *hujar*. In one interpretation, Ibn Saud's greatest political acumen lay in encouraging, or tolerating, this retention of the social norm of tribal structures:

> Ibn Saud found himself facing a religious revival movement adopted by the three major bedouin tribes in Najd, the Utayba, Mutair and

38 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 73.

39 The Mutair, Qahtan, Utaiba and Ajman exemplified tribes which did not settle but maintained their tribal structure and nomadic raiding. See Kostiner, "Tribe and state formation", p. 231.

40 *Ibid.* Distinct Ikhwan characteristics were: dress; fanaticism; forced conversion and economic subsidisation (Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 33).

41 Shami'a, pp. 119–20.

42 At a later date (in 1920) his role as imam was noted by Dickson on his mission to al-Hasa, when he claimed that Ibn Saud's role and power as imam and leader of Islam was increasing. "From all sides he was receiving letters and offers of support as the one true companion of Islam left in the world." (L/P&S/10/391.) Bell reported an interview with a prominent Wahhabi in 1920 who explained Ibn Saud's acknowledged rights over the settled population of Najd: "They replied with one voice that his position was a religious as well as political leader." See Bell note, 23 February 1920, L/P&S/10/390.

> Ajman. What did he bring to this tribal religious organisation which already existed? It was only a moral input. He was only able to become the Godfather of the movement because he was by heredity the Imam of the Wahhabis and the descendent of the Al Saud who adopted Wahhabism in the 18th century. As for the effective power that Ibn Saud secured from the Ikhwan, he benefited more than they did. He perceived the movement, recognised the high participation in it from the three major tribes which controlled Najdi trade routes and borders, and saw an ideal opportunity to adapt the movement.[43]

Ibn Saud's implicit acceptance of the Ikhwan's partial tribal independence shows that his flexible incorporation of tribal norms and interests was perhaps as important to the effectiveness of these new settlements as was their manifestation of radical social change.[44] His accommodation of accepted traditions accords with Weber's observation that under traditional leadership, innovations within the political system can never be promoted as new, but must be presented as a tradition "rediscovered".[45] In this instance, the "rediscovered traditions" were both tribal confederations and religious devotion. As well as incorporating these traditions, Ibn Saud also used one of these societal traditions, Wahhabi ideology, to modify other social norms which militated against his developing power: that is, he used religious ideological traditions to modify the other dominant tribal norms such as *asabiyya* (tribal ethos), raiding for booty, and constant realignments of loyalty.

The first societal norm which enabled Ibn Saud to effect social change and settle the bedouin was *maslaha.* Drought and economic necessity were important in motivating the bedouin to settle in the *hujar,* because of "the privileged position of al-Artawiyyah and al-Ghat-Ghat . . . abundant water, seed, arms".[46] Ibn Saud built on such material incentives to create an attractive social structure within the *hujar:* he "placed all necessary facilities at their disposal: money, seed and agricultural implements, religious teachers and the wherewithal for building mosques, schools and dwellings: and . . . arms and ammunition for the defence of the

43 Shami'a, p. 120.
44 al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, p. 194.
45 Weber, p. 342.
46 al-Artawiyya in east Sudair was known as a place to rest and replenish water supplies (Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 48).

faith".[47] One particular instance in which Ibn Saud catered for social interests was in founding a *hijra* ideally situated to develop a new trade route which would minimise his society's dependence on the Kuwait port.[48]

By exploiting the self-interest of his tribal groups, Ibn Saud motivated them to have their own piece of Islamic paradise on earth, so that the *hujar* also embodied a traditional tribal value[49] and derived from tribal needs.[50] Given that the *hujar* settlements were founded partly on self-interest, they were an inaccurate indicator of the breakup of traditional tribal norms. The new Ikhwan military structure also accommodated old tribal quota systems of contribution which had been used during the Second Saudi Realm (1843–65).[51] On the other hand, however, the *hujar* were an unprecedented type of community in Najd which created a cohesive focus out of fragmented or migrant groups, preparing them to implement a

47 Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 26 and Vassiliev, p. 269.

48 There was a "growing tendency to expand state interests by allying them with tribal forces as well as the forces of proselytism . . . in order to minimise Saudi dependence on the port of Kuwayt, Ibn Sa'ud tried to develop a new trade route through the ports of Jubayl, Hufhuf, and Qatif at al-Ahsa. This he did by allowing the Mutair to establish a hijra in a region leading to Jubayl Hufhuf on the Gulf." See Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, p. 43. See also Abd al-Aziz al-Qusaibi (Ibn Saud's agent at Bahrain) to Dickson, 3 June 1920, FO 371/5063/E7216.

49 "Economic necessity, drought and the hardship of bedouin life were the incentives that motivated the *bedu* to settle and become *hadar*. Their migration to the north especially was limited because they did not wish to be under the Turks' authority and later on, the English. The official condition of joining any *hijra* is to abandon the customs and commitments of the nomadic lifestyle. However, this condition was not put to practice and the settlement in the *hujar* depended heavily on a tribal basis and the *hujar* of the Ikhwan indeed became centres for the Sheikhs of major tribes." (Vassiliev, p. 271.)

50 "Rather, the Ikhwan gave voice to the desire of Nejdi tribes to maintain the Saudi state as a chieftaincy, in which internal tribal autonomy, freedom to raid, and rights to trade would be preserved." See Kostiner, "Tribe and state formation", p. 235. To support his argument, Kostiner cites developments in the state structure after Ibn Saud's annexation of the Hijaz, where the rebellion of the Ikhwan in that period reflects their discontent with Ibn Saud's divergence from tribal power systems, because the new polity excluded them from positions of power in the new administration.

51 In the military organisation in the amirate of Riyadh in the Second Saudi Realm, each tribe or town had to provide fighters and livestock, taking four-fifths of the booty rather than regular salaries, or levies (Vassiliev, p. 223).

new political agenda.[52] The *hujar*'s incorporation of accepted norms showed that, to an extent, both ruler and ruled camouflaged old tribal interests by using a "consensus on pretext", the pretext being religious revivalism.

While Ibn Saud accommodated tribal distinctions within the *hujar*, he also undermined tribal cohesion by using religious ideology to replace the old value of *asabiyya* with a unified loyalty to his rule. In imposing a religious ideology based on the Islamic *umma*, Ibn Saud wanted to create a social confederation to replace the old tribal ethos of *asabiyya*. Therefore, "the Islamic *umma* can be seen as a supertribe that evolved from a tribal federation".[53] By using this religious value which was socially acceptable, Ibn Saud transformed a "tribal value", *asabiyya*, which had contributed to the traditional, fragmented tribal structure. In order to achieve this transformation, Ibn Saud used the indoctrination programmed of the Ikhwan to persuade them to renounce tribal ties and hostilities; such renunciation was a considerable concession on their part, since in a desert society the tribe provided security, identity and a considerable focus of power. Despite the hardships of Najdi life, Ibn Saud's ideologues were relatively successful in converting such groups to the spiritual value of universal brotherhood. One ideological factor which ensured success was that Wahhabism stressed equality between Muslims, a "rejection of hierarchies based on tribal nobility", the emphasis on equality particularly encouraged tribal groups with a low social status to join the revival.[54]

Ibn Saud, in controlling the *hujar* settlements, managed to accommodate these contradictory ideological ideals of Islamic equality and tribal éliteness. Thus, while the religious training and practices of the *hujar* were directly supervised by the Riyadh ulama,[55] "even the most renowned *hujar* settlers did not fully collaborate with Ibn Saud and absorb the values they were supposed to".[56] For instance, the *hujar*[57] also sustained

52 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 96.

53 Tibi, p. 134.

54 al-Rasheed, p. 242.

55 The *mataw'a* were recruited outside the tribal settlements, each with a *tilmidh* (trainee) recruited from the settlement. The *mataw'a* had no administrative or judicial functions, but rather conducted religious instruction and enforced Wahhabi principles (al-Yassini, p. 53).

56 Kostiner, "On Instruments", p. 305.

57 Ibn Saud's forces comprised Riyadh inhabitants, the Subay and al-Sahoul, Ahl

traditional social distinctions along *hadar-bedu* (townspeople–bedouin) lines,[58] merely transforming the professions or functions which various castes held, and the hierarchical aspect of the tribal system persisted, in that being selected for raiding activities indicated social superiority.[59]

Religious ideology and social cohesion

In the Ikhwan revival, Ibn Saud channelled social customs into dynamics of social transformation. Before this period, Ibn Saud's religious legitimacy as a ruler had not contributed substantially to his power; in fact it often alienated him from neighbouring groups.[60] As has been discussed, by 1912 Ibn Saud had still not secured a stable cohesive support in the centre of the peninsula, regardless of his energetic campaigning, and it has been argued that he lacked such support because he had not previously made the most of the traditional political-religious *dawa* which could unite the inhabitants of Najd behind the Al Saud. From then onwards, therefore, he began to bolster religious ideology more vigorously, encouraging the Wahhabi revival as his cohesive political instrument.[61] Clearly, Ibn Saud could not have predicted the exceptional

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hawadir al-mudun (townspeople), *ahl al-hujar* (*hujar* people), and bedouin (al-Zirikli, p. 46). Instead of a centralised military hierarchy the Ikhwan were governed by personalities, with Ibn Saud as supreme commander. Al-Dawish and Sultan ibn Bijad were the Ikhwan commanders of sufficient tribal authority to initiate strikes independently of Ibn Saud (Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 70; al-Zirikli, p. 46).

58 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 70. According to Ibn Saud himself, no distinct line divided these groups; rather there were different degrees of faith. He called *hadar* those who had undergone a full process of "civilisation" and settled in *hujar*. Some of the groups still remained "partly *badu*" (Philby's Diary, 13 and 14 April 1918, p. 305).

59 al-Rihani, p. 194.

60 When it seemed in 1906 that Ibn Saud might instigate an expedition into Oman, the British representative Cox noted that his Wahhabi connection was a serious source of concern for the desert rulers (Troeller, p. 23). Also the British ambassador warned the foreign secretary in May 1906, following Ibn Saud's defeat of the Rashidis at Bussorah, of "serious consequences" if a Wahhabi dynasty ruled in central Arabia (O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey, 1 May 1906, L/P&S/20/FO31).

61 "Ibn Saud's formation of the Akhwan was probably carried out with a view to political rather than religious aggrandisement, but we must take facts as they are and Ibn Sa'ud is the head of the really fanatical Akhwan." (Despatch from Colonel C. E. Wilson to Major Young, 9 November 1919, FO 371/4147.)

success of the Ikhwan movement; however, he realised that his authority would increase if he could encourage his society's enthusiasm for Wahhabism. Thus he tried to refocus social loyalty away from specific social groups and towards the Islamic *umma*, where the *watan* (nation) was considered the heart of Islam, around which the society was obliged to unite. It should be pointed out that Ibn Saud did not devise the belief system which shaped the revival: this was the old, traditional Wahhabi theology which Sheikh Abdallah al-Sheikh,[62] the new ideologue of Ibn Saud's religious indoctrination process, now promoted and amplified to strengthen the Ikhwan movement and through it the Al Saud. This use of religious ideology was a vital element in stimulating and legitimising the Ikhwan militancy.

While the bedouin sections which Ibn Saud aimed to convert were not at that time religious[63] and displayed little affinity for his religious authority, these groups nevertheless belonged to a society where Wahhabism had penetrated the culture deeply. Therefore, in encouraging Wahhabi ideals, Ibn Saud used a more profound, natural means of motivating the Najdi bedouin than any other formal ideology. The bedouin were accordingly subjected in the *hujar* to an intensive educational system which inculcated Wahhabi values,[64] while an amir and *hakim* (ruler) administered civil matters.[65]

Through this re-education, the Wahhabi unitarian creed became a powerful, unifying social norm which Ibn Saud could direct against an external enemy, and it enabled him to combat the power of his rival

62 Sheikh Abdallah ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Latif al-Sheikh. See al-Yassini, p. 51.

63 Sultan al-Dawish, the governor of al-Artawiyya, told Habib that the Islam practised by the bedouin was "Islam of Arabism" in which basic precepts were not known or practised. (Majid ibn Khathila of al-Ghat-Ghat, March 1968, cited in Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 30.)

64 For example, after taking al-Hasa, Ibn Saud provided effectively for the administration of his new province. He paid special attention to the education of the largely Shiite population and reformed the courts to operate in accordance with the shariah law. Thus he ensured religious indoctrination or religious re-education to strengthen his power.

65 "Extract from a note on the Ikhwan movement" by Major H. R. P. Dickson, political agent, Bahrain, in "Notes of the Middle East", No. 4, 24 May 1920, *Arab Bulletin*, Vol. 4 (Archive Editions, Farnham, 1989); hereinafter cited as Dickson, "On the Ikhwan movement".

Hussein on the grounds of the Hashemites' religious impurity. The conflict between Ibn Saud and Hussein had always been intensified by religious differences between Hijaz, which was the centre of traditional scholarly orthodox Islam, and Najd, home of the extreme, revivalist Wahhabiyya. These regional differences in religious outlook were exemplified by the attitudes of the respective ulema:[66] the Hijazi ulema opposed the Wahhabi view that non-Wahhabis were infidels and attacked Wahhabism itself,[67] while the Najdi ulema promoted the absolute purity of their own sect. The hub of Hussein and Ibn Saud's rivalry was that each claimed the exclusive religious wisdom to govern and protect the religious rights of the Islamic faithful.

Ibn Saud utilised another traditional norm: that of the intrinsically religious structure of the Saudi state to which the society was traditionally accustomed. This specific religious structure gave him a further advantage over Hussein in the form of religious authority. His role as both amir and imam made him the foremost political and religious leader of his state, with these functions being more formally distinguished than Hussein's roles as sharifate and amir. Historically, the Al Saud structure of rule had always separated religious leadership from political authority although it did formally relate the two offices.[68] The political and spiritual leaders of the Al-Saud system were separated into two distinct groups: the umara, or lay rulers of the Al Saud family, and the ulema, whose function was to

66 "Najdi society was . . . subject to almost no foreign influence at all, Hejaz was urban in its politics and outlook, its power was concentrated in the cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jeddah, and it had always been subject to the influence of cultures external to the peninsula . . . The difference in educational background between the Nejdi and Hejazi ulema made the former more fanatical and literal in their understanding and application of religion . . . their Hejazi counterparts were more willing to depart from tradition." (al-Yassini, pp. 43–4.)

67 An early nineteenth-century incident illustrates the conflict between Hijazi and Najdi religious legitimation. To refute Wahhabism, the Mecca ulema criticised their Najdi counterparts for declaring non-Wahhabi Muslims infidels. According to the Mecca ulema the amir of Mecca was a Muslim ruler who applied the shariah, and his authority should be accepted. See Ahmad 'Abd-al-Ghafur Attar, *Saqr al-jazira*, 2nd edn (Jeddah, al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiyya lil Tiba'a, 1964), p. 572; hereinafter cited as Attar.

68 While Ibn Saud's possession of both these roles is symbolically valid, to be precise, in this period a formal distinction existed between political and religious

issue religious judgments which legitimised the leader's political as well as religious policy. Significantly, the tribal chiefs of Najd were not incorporated within this dual power structure and held no administrative positions. Rather, their political activities were kept in check by the ulema's issuance of fatwas, a decision-making process which bypassed the option of seeking opinions from tribal and settled social groups. Therefore, although it was important for a Najdi ruler to confer and consult with his tribes, whether loyal or combative, the religious judiciary structure of Ibn Saud's state was ideally organised, in principle, to dominate over these social groups' individualist agendas. Since the Qur'an was the traditional constitution of the Saudi state, strategies and deliberations of Saudi governance were ostensibly viewed as ordained by God and therefore not open to societal challenge.

So Ibn Saud had an advantageous "dual image" which his ideologues and the ulema could deliberately project.[69] Depicting Ibn Saud as the spirit of Wahhabism to the Ikhwan, the ulema also ensured their own financial security through his support.[70] Further, by preaching against *fitna* and emphasising the social responsibility of obedience to the ruler as an Islamic doctrinal priority,[71] they strongly pre-empted political disorder and opposition to the Al Saud rule. These were the ideological

leadership within his family. In about 1900 Abd al-Rahman al-Saud handed over the political leadership to his son Abdul-Aziz, then twenty years old, while retaining the religious role of imam. Ibn Saud respected his father's religious authority and in return his father did not interfere with Ibn Saud's military command.

69 A description of Ibn Saud's court during the 1930s illustrates the importance of Ibn Taymiyya's political theory to the Wahhabite political system, where the throne, which must be shared by two people, stood as a political and religious symbol, and "literally and figuratively represented the interest shared by the *ulama* and the *umara* in the preservation of that Law that was the very basis of the Unitarian or Wahhabi society." (Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 207.) The writings of Sheikh Abdallah al-Sheikh stressed the dual duty to obey God and imam.

70 "In matters of religion [Ibn Saud] submitted to the wishes of the *ulama*, but when they rendered him advice on political or military matters, with which he disagreed, he sent them back to their books." See H. C. Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia* (London, Arthur Barker, 1934), p. 214. In sum, Ibn Saud's attitude toward the ulema was influenced by his political objectives: on the one hand, he sought ulema support and endorsement of his rule; on the other, he rejected their traditional right to judge and evaluate the ruler's policies.

71 Although the ulama identified themselves with the Saudi authority they expressed disagreement with certain of its policies through the issuance of fatwas and in

norms which Ibn Saud could enforce to gain control over the powerful tribal sections of the Mutair and Ajman which had originally constituted the core of the Ikhwan movement, and in this way he minimised popular interference with political aspects of his chieftaincy.[72] The Ikhwan, strongly directed by these religious ideological norms, came to accept the form of strong leadership that Ibn Saud was seeking to secure.

The *hujar* were a concrete reshaping of social structure, but the *hujar* also had a distinct ideological significance. These settlements were realisations of the Wahhabi ideological ideals. The society accepted the *hujar* as an organising concept, ideologically derived from the Qur'an and Wahhabism.[73] Perceiving the *hujar* as a valid conceptual ideal, the society allowed it to re-channel societal interests and motivations. The conceptual importance of the *hujar* was illustrated later when Ibn Saud and Hussein disputed the possession of Khurma. It could be argued that the Ikhwan were motivated to protect Khurma not because it was literally a *hijra,* but rather because it conceptually symbolised a *hijra,* as a contained Wahhabi community under threat from the religiously impure Hashemites.

In addition to using social norms such as *maslaha* and religious ideology, Ibn Saud made use of the tribal custom and appetite for raiding. For instance, the dominant Ikhwan section of the Mutair, led by Faisal al-Dawish, were renowned for their ferocity. The Ikhwan movement itself advocated intensive raiding as a means of expansive proselytism, of acquiring control over religiously resistant social groups. Ibn Saud's earlier attempts to secure cohesion in Najd had clearly made him aware that

private audiences. Because of their close relations with all strata of the population and their control of the educational system, the ulema could have mobilised the masses against Ibn Saud. However, "it appears that they adopted a passive attitude toward political authority and continued to hope that the king's policy would express Wahhabi principles." (al-Yassini, p. 50.)

72 Aziz al-Azmeh, "Wahhabite Polity", *Arabia and the Gulf: from Traditional Society to Modern States*, ed. Ian Richardson Netton (London and Sydney, 1986), pp. 75–90; hereinafter cited as al-Azmeh.

73 In *al-Usul al-thalatha*, Sheikh Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab cited verses from *The Qur'an, Sura IV*, verses 97–100, as quoted in al-Yassini, p. 52. The Wahhabi revival closely associated *Jahiliyya* (ignorance of Islam), with the concept of *hijra*, and viewed migration from the land of polytheism to the land of Islam as a duty incumbent on all Muslims. See al-Yassini, p. 52.

such dominant tribes, and the evolving Ikhwan movement itself, were zealots. He now used their military-religious zeal. Meanwhile the growing social solidarity evidenced in the Ikhwan movement demonstrated that religious solidarity was the only social norm which would unite the dominant and challenging social groups in Najd as a cohesive military force behind Ibn Saud.

However, the new dynamic of the Ikhwan cohesion was also affected by the attitude of other sections of the society to the revival and its adherents. Thus, in examining Ibn Saud's social restructuring of Najd, one must consider the movement's relationship to the rest of Saudi society. Between 1914 and 1919 three major tribes united within the Ikhwan, thus raising the question of whether the movement was actually a bedouin form of confederation which was distinct from, or opposed to, ***hadar*** groups. Did the revival pit one major social group against the other? – "Those who wrote about Ibn Saud did not explain this phenomenon."[74] As has been noted, some scholars assert that the Ikhwan were simply a loosely allied group, but there is ample documentation about their activities to show that they were a defined rather than disparate group. Their increasing attempts to control other social groups and impose the extreme Ikhwan religious norms naturally affected the broader societal attitude towards them. Al-Rihani and Wahbah have documented the ruthlessness with which the Ikhwan increasingly attempted to impose their religious norms on other sections of the Najdi society,[75] which had the potential to alienate social support for Ibn Saud as an Ikhwan mentor. In this sense, "the relationship between Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan was contradictory from the start. His agreement with them from its initiation carried with it the seeds of failure and conflict."[76] The Ikhwan would name anyone who did not belong to their settlements as ***kafir*** (infidel); they opposed music, perfume, luxurious goods, technology, the telegraph and cars:

> Before I arrived in Riyadh in 1926 they lashed in public the head of the *Diwan Miliki* [royal court] simply because they suspected

74 Shami'a, pp. 119–26.

75 Hafez Wahbah, *Khamsun 'aman fi jarizat al-Arab* (Cairo, Matba'at Mustafa al-Baba al-Halabi, 1960), pp. 49–50.

76 Shami'a, p. 126.

Captain E. Boyle,
The Honourable Commandant of the British Fleet in the
Red Sea.

My Sincere Friend,

Information has reached me of the termination of your appointment in the Red Sea and since I have noticed your energy and bravery during your time of command and have been thankful for your activities I implore Allah to grant you perpetual success and I beg Your Excellency to take every opportunity to give me pleasure in hearing of your continual happiness.

Yours most sincerely,

16th Safar 1336.
(16/11/1917)

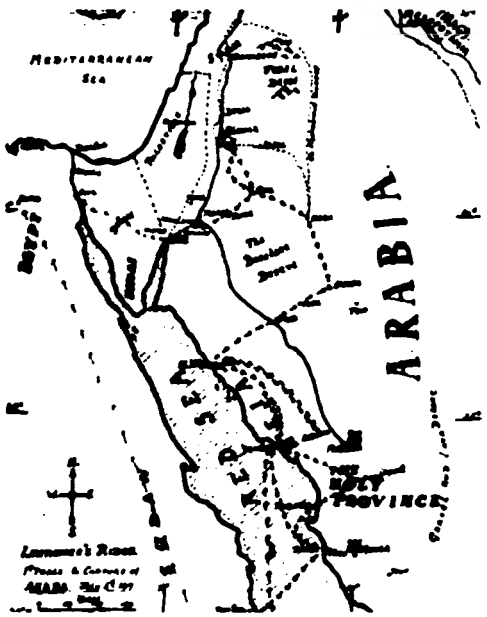
Translated by E. Dabi,
British Agency,
Jeddah.

1. Hussein, Sharif of the Hijaz, November 1917 (photographer unknown). Letter from Sharif Hussein to Captain Boyle, 16 November 1917.

2. Sharif Hussein on horseback with retinue, c. *1917 (T. E. Lawrence).*

3. Attending the prayer around the Kaaba, Mecca, date unknown (L. Nurett & G. P. Devy).

4. Bab-Mecca in Jeddah, date unknown (H. St John Philby).



5. Map of Arabia showing Lawrence's rides en route to Aqaba, July 1917.

6. Amir Faisal, Amir Zaid, Sharif Sharif, Abdallah ibn Thawad, Sami al-Bekri, Abdallah ibn Dakhil with Ugail bodyguard on the march, December 1916 (photographer unknown).

7. Arab patrol on the march, c. 1917 (Goslett).

8. Sharifian army trained troops, camel corps, probably Wadi Ithus, between Aqaba and Gueirs, September 1917 (photographer unknown).

9. Amir Faisal's army during a review, Wejh, January 1917 (photographer unknown).

10. Utaiba troops at Yenbo, date unknown (T. E. Lawrence).

11. Ali ibn el Hussein, Abdallah, Motloy al-Himried, date unknown (Captain Macrury).

12. Awda Abu Tayi and his kinsmen on the first day of the march from Wejh to the Howaitat, in the spring pastures of the Syrian Desert, May 1917 (T. E. Lawrence).

13. Amir Faisal, 3rd son of Sharif Hussein and a major Arab leader of the Arab Revolt, photographed at the Paris Peace Conference after the War, c. *1918 (photographer unknown).*

14. Khurma, December 1917 (H. St John Philby).

15. Sharif Nasir, July 1917 (T. E. Lawrence).

16. Camp of Dhari ibn Tawla c. 1917 (H. St John Philby).

17. Lieutenant Colonel Joyce, Sharif Faisal and Jaafar Pasha in Wadi Kuntilla, August 1917 (T. E. Lawrence).

18. Philby and escort, Jeddah, June 1918 (photographer unknown).

19. Gertrude Bell, Major Walsh, Colonel Lawrence, Sir H. Samuel, Abdallah, Major Najid al-Sultan Adwan, Amman, April 1921 (T. E. Lawrence).

20. Ibn Saud with brothers and sons near Thaj, March 1911 (W. Shakespear).

21. Ibn Saud's army on the march near Habl, March 1911 (W. Shakespear).

22. Group of Al Sabah and Al Saud, Kuwait, date unknown (W. Shakespear).

23. Ibn Saud's army on the march, c. 1911 (W. Shakespear)

24. Visit of Ibn Saud to Basra, December 1916 (G. Bell).

25. Visit of Ibn Saud to Basra, December 1916 (G. Bell).

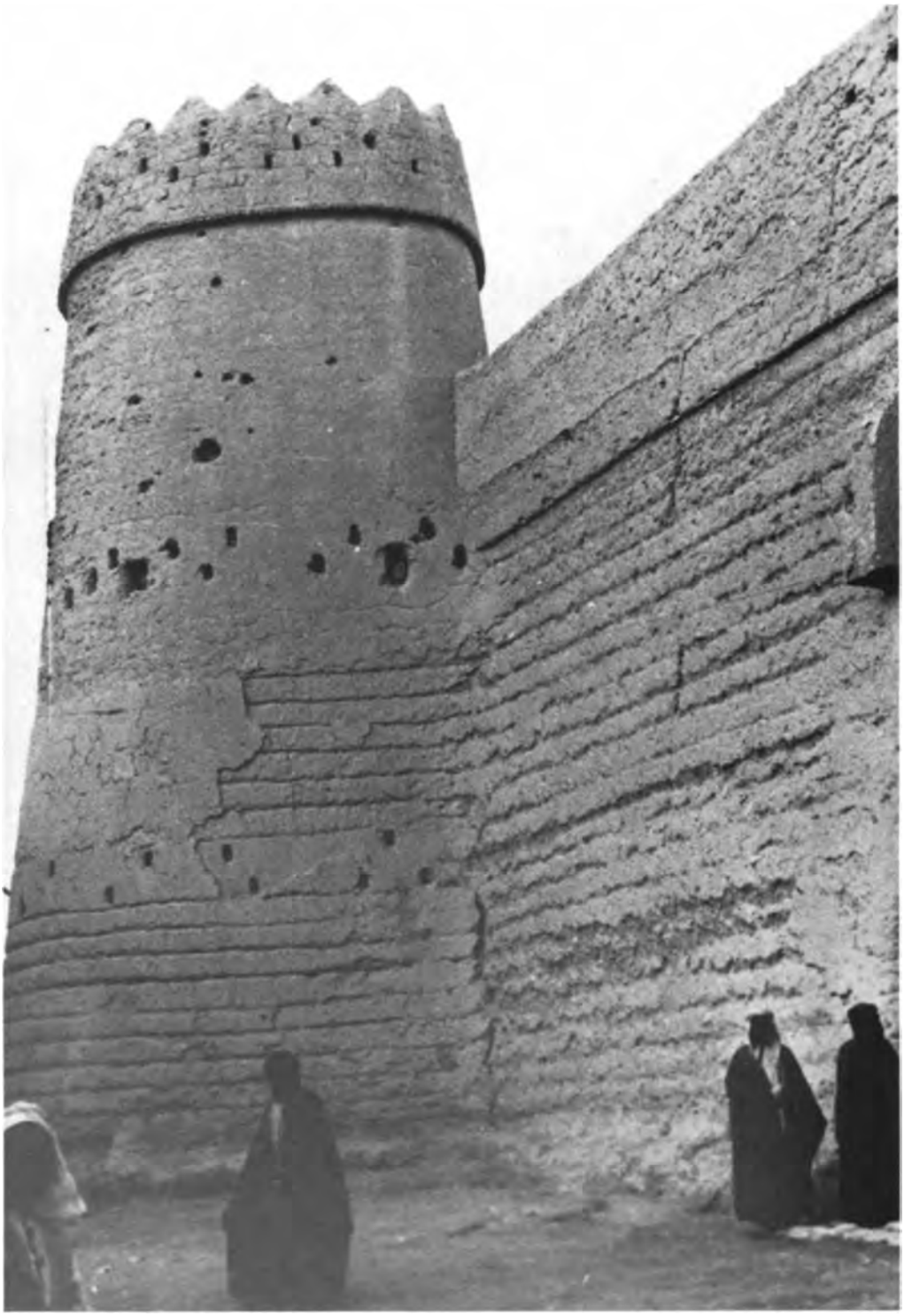
26. Visit of Ibn Saud to Basra, December 1916 (G. Bell).

23. Ihn Sauds army on the march, C. 1911 (W. Shakespear)

24. Visit of Ihn Saud to Basra, December 1916 (G. Bell).

25. Visit of Ibn Saud to Basra, December 1916 (G. Bell).

26. Visit of Ibn Saud to Basra, December 1916 (G. Bell).



31. The Mismak, date unknown (G. de Gaury).

> he did not pray with the group. Thus they had authority over the townspeople . . . They fought with bedouins who were not with them, and they made it halal to kill them, named them as *mushrik*, and gave themselves permission to kill them. They fought with the townspeople who did not adhere to their norms, because they were not Islamic. Anarchy prevailed and the thread of peace and security was almost cut.[77]

This behaviour of the Ikhwan clearly illustrates how the social situation in Najd was developing where extremist groups often patrolled, threatened and forced their morals and behaviour upon more moderate *hadar* and *bedu* sections.[78] The absoluteness of the Ikhwan belief was backed by coercive superiority, and obviously created currents among the broader society of fear and dislike, along with a loyalty which was either genuine or pretended. To an extent, therefore, the Ikhwan's behaviour encouraged additional social cohesion mainly by force and fervour. Thus, although the Ikhwan were advantageous to Ibn Saud through the strength of their conviction which in turn increased social and military conviction, they also presented him with a considerable problem because their extremist actions alienated less devout sections of society because they independently assumed the role of religious police.

At the same time, it was the ferocity of the Ikhwan which encouraged the townspeople's adherence to Ibn Saud, for he alone could control this extremist section.[79] As a result the *hadar* developed a greater tendency to adhere to Ibn Saud, while at the same time their independence was checked by Ikhwan militancy itself, by the proximity of the *hujar* to the towns. In conclusion, it can be said therefore that during the period 1916–24, Ibn Saud's development of the Ikhwan movement achieved his objective of increasing his military control over a greater number of subjects, minimising the weakness inherent in a bedouin state and army,

77 al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, p. 265.

78 Dickson noted, "It is on record when the Ikhwan first appeared in the streets of Hofhuf, the capital of Hasa, they beat any women they found in the streets, and shot [anyone smoking cigarettes]." (Extracts from a note on the Ikhwan movement, Dickson, "On the Ikhwan movement", p. 104.)

79 For instance, Ibn Saud, together with Ibn Jiluwi, amir of al-Hasa, "had to summarily shoot several of the Ikhwan before they could bring them to their senses". (Dickson, "On the Ikhwan movement".)

and conserving his resources by substituting the hope of eternal reward for the society's mercenary considerations.[80]

Interestingly, Ibn Saud added a new dimension to traditional religious revivalism. He deliberately pioneered the use of modern psychological techniques, increasing control over the Ikhwan by encouraging religious fervour and an élite sense of identity: they "considered themselves guardians of state security and morals. Their increased political and social power created . . . a group consciousness that did not exist among the forces of Sherif Hussein."[81] After such proselytism had established fanaticism, Ibn Saud could trigger Ikhwan strikes instantly and at will, so that, while "docile in the *hujar*, [they] became invincible warriors when set against Ibn Saud's enemies".[82] The Ikhwan had considerable reconnaissance skills and the endurance and commitment to march for a day to effect a ten-minute raid.[83] Ibn Saud's strategic goals could be achieved because these *hujar* were distributed "so skilfully that [the Ikhwan] were mobile enough to cross the length and breadth of the peninsula, and sedentary enough to be in a specific locality when he needed them".[84]

Cohesion and the associated society: Ibn Saud's problems in enlisting wartime social support

The growth of the Ikhwan revival movement was slowly and gradually boosting Ibn Saud's cohesive social and military support, but the effects were not fully felt during this period. For instance, sometimes the modest

80 "Report on the Operation of the Nejd Mission", 29 November 1918, FO 371/4144, No. 4370.

81 al-Yassini, p. 54.

82 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 7.

83 See Alangari, M.A. dissertation, p. 13. "This Ikhwan army . . . had a definite objective, simplicity of plan, offensive action, speed of movement and surprise." See Sir John Bagot Glubb, *War in the Desert* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1960), p. 231; hereinafter cited as Glubb, *War in the Desert*.

84 "The *hujar* represented military camps all over the peninsula. And the Ikhwan were the soldiers of these military camps . . . at his disposal at any time." (al-Zirikli, p. 70.) Settlement inhabitants divided into two classes: those on semi-alert who responded to the call of jihad, reserve forces, herdsmen; and those who remained to maintain daily business. Ibn Saud could call up the first and second groups, whereas the ulama's approval was needed to mobilise the third (Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, pp. 59–63).

material incentives[85] and capacity for sheer practical survival which Ibn Saud provided for the *hujar* could not match the greater financial incentives which Hussein could offer because of British assistance to him. As a result, in 1916 and 1917 certain Najdi tribal affiliations swung towards Hussein in the western arena. Ibn Saud tried to extend his authority or suzerainty over indigenous tribes, to derive political cohesion. However, although he unified many fragmented groups through religious ideology, he was elsewhere hindered by the norm that tribal organisation operates around "a balance of power rather than its concentration".[86]

Early in the war his poor coercive ability derived from his fragmented, strife-ridden society, in which there was a risk of at least partial collapse of tribal support.[87] This partly resulted from the lack of a distinct tribal coercive arm such as the Shammar (which he was trying to counter by developing the Ikhwan); and he lost further domestic support because his British alliance pressurised him into imposing a blockade which the society disliked because it hindered camel-dealing with Damascus and closed the commercial routes to Kuwait and Syria via Jabal Shammar.[88] The blockade damaged the tribes' commercial role as trade route escorts,[89] and because there was a "continuity between the social and military existences" of tribes,[90] the loss of material benefits diminished the unifying

85 Ibn Saud described his subsidy system: "In peace time . . . we give them whatever they need in terms of clothes, rations, or money . . . During war each one gets a cartridge, runs to his rifle, he rides the camel to war, taking with him a little money and a few dates . . . We used to march for three days without food . . . It used to be that the villager was more sure-footed and braver than the bedouin. But now the settled bedouin, the people of the *hujar*, are more stable in war and more anxious to seek martyrdom." See al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, p. 264; Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, pp. 42–3.

86 Gellner, "Tribalism", p. 109.

87 In 1917 the tribes considered to be subject to Ibn Saud were the Mutair, Utaiba, Harb, Bani 'Abdallah, Ajman, Murrah, Manasir, Bani Hajar, Subai', Sahul, Qahtan and Dawasir. However, not all of these were always under his control: "Ataiba and Harb come for the greater part under the Sharif." See *Arab Bulletin*, No. 38, 12 January 1917.

88 Kostiner, "The Hashemite 'Tribal Confederacy'", pp. 126–43.

89 "Tribes . . . were the main force that escorted trade convoys." (Kostiner, "Tribe and state formation", p. 226.)

90 "The continuity between the social and military existences of the tribal armed forces often made them formidable; they did not need, like ordinary recruits to be specially trained and endowed with an artificial *esprit de corps*. They arrived, fully trained and encadré, with recognised leaders." (Gellner, "Tribalism", p. 15.)

tribal sense of purpose which motivated participation in Ibn Saud's military campaigns. That is, Ibn Saud could not sustain tribal loyalty while the Najdi tribes' means of subsistence was under threat.[91] Here, the specific conflict between Ibn Saud and his society was that he was offering them an abstract concept, a British alliance useful to his hegemony, in order to justify their material deprivation. However, Najdi society could not live on an abstract political asset, and "one can imagine the difficulties he encountered explaining his adherence to the British".[92] On the other hand, following the dictates of early British wartime strategy coincided with Ibn Saud's personal interest in suppressing the Al Rashid by undermining their economic system. He experienced a personal conflict of interests because his British alliance angered and alienated the socially dominant groups whose support he required. They despised his collusion with British attempts, for instance, to attract the loyalty of disaffected elements of the Shammar in order to erode the power of the Ottoman-allied Al Rashid. "Our dealings with the Shammar . . . may have been necessitated by military considerations but that in itself was a confession of weakness dangerous to make before an ignorant and generally hostile people."[93]

His socio-economic relations with his society were further destabilised when a new Kuwait–Hail smuggling route opened, causing a realignment of traditional tribes loyal to Ibn Saud around new trade centres, and alienating them from him.[94] His struggle to control north-eastern Najd was spearheaded by his tribe, the warlike Mutair (1,500 tents),[95] against the powerful Shammar (3,000) and Ajman (10,000), at that time loyal to al-Rashid dispersed from the Gulf to southern Iraq.[96] His ultimately successful expulsion of the Ajman caused considerable casualties,[97] and

91 Tribal militias were "exceedingly responsive to pressures other than the long-term plans of the supreme command . . . Seasonal obligations and customs meant at least as much to them as long-term strategy." (Gellner, "Tribalism", p. 114.)

92 Troeller, p. 123.

93 *Najd Report*, No. 122; L/P&S/10/2182/1913, Pts. 9 and 10.

94 Kostiner, "On Instruments", p. 226.

95 See Admiralty, *Geographical Handbook*, pp. 83–4.

96 "Memorandum on Relations between the Ajman and the Recent History of the Latter", 25 July 1916, No. 3508; L/P&S/10/2812/1913; hereinafter cited as "Memorandum, Ajman".

97 Ibn Saud's clan had a bitter relationship with the Ajman since the 1860s when they sided with an ousted Najdi ruler against a leader who was Ibn Saud's direct ancestor (Philby, *Najd Report*, No. 122; L/P&S/10/2182/191, Pts. 9 and 10).

his brother Sa'd was killed. Moreover, the escape to Kuwait of key Ajmani groups in 1916 typified the way in which tribes could use migration as a means of evading a leader's control. Tension then arose in Ibn Saud's relationship with Kuwait, for he insisted to Cox that the Ajman be expelled from Kuwait, but the new Kuwaiti ruler refused.[98] This marked an important change in Ibn Saud's foreign relations, for the death in 1915 of his invaluable ally Mubarak diminished his strategic support from Kuwait. When the new Sheikh ultimately expelled the Ajman, they simply rejoined Ibn Rashid's forces;[99] and Ibn Saud's insistence on their expulsion soured his relations with an important British protectorate to settle a lesser internal dispute. To Britain, such tribal conflicts wasted Ibn Saud's coercive resources which could be better used on its own behalf, and he was pressed to conciliation. Ibn Saud resolved the dispute in a manner which allowed him to continue the conflict secretly without losing British support, for his peace agreement with the Ajman stated that the "[Mutair] . . . are not prohibited from raiding the Ajman and vice versa".[100] Thus Ibn Saud could discreetly use certain loyal Mutairi groups to combat the Ajman while he himself had agreed peace with them. His strategic and tactical needs matched the Mutairi appetite for raiding,[101] and this coincidence of interests brought them temporarily under his control.

The persistent Ajmani and Shammar resistance denied Ibn Saud the military capacity to defeat Ibn Rashid, as he told Philby and Hamilton.[102] He could control the Shammar only in the economic sphere, such as

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The Ajman had also allied with the rebellious Al Saud section of the Ara'if ("Memorandum, Ajman"). In January 1915, the Ajman refused to help Ibn Saud at the battle of Jirab, thus contributing to his defeat.

98 Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, p. 14. In 1917 the newly appointed sheikh of Kuwait renewed the granting of asylum to the Ajman (A. T. Wilson to Arab Bureau, Cairo, "Relations with Ibn Saud", 17 September 1917, FO 371/3044); hereinafter cited as Wilson, "Relations".

99 Some 300 of the 2,000 refugees went to Ibn Rashid's aid when summoned in May 1916, for example. ("Memorandum, Ajman")

100 Wilson, "Relations".

101 The Mutair, one of the most powerful tribes in Arabia, became the "backbone" of the Ikhwan. Their chief, Faisal al-Dawish, settled in the first *hijra*, al-Artawiyya (Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, pp. 48–9) where the Mutair inhabitants numbered 40,000 (Attar, pp. 200–1).

102 Philby, "Report on the operation of Nejd Mission", FO 371/4144/370, Diary of Hamilton on a visit to Najd, 19–28 December 1917.

when his son, with 4,000 warriors, blocked their smuggling route.[103] The severance of the Kuwait and al-Qasim routes[104] only escalated his conflict with the Shammar and Ajman, who fought back against the Mutair. Further, it encouraged the sheikh of Kuwait to limit Ibn Saud's power in 1917 by reactivating the Hail smuggling route and renewing the granting of asylum to the Ajman.[105] Kuwaiti hostility to Ibn Saud then intensified because the British Persian Gulf resident, supposedly a protector of Kuwaiti interests, offered subsidies to induce Ibn Saud to sever the Kuwait smuggling route,[106] thus duplicitously directing aggression against its own ally. Thus Ibn Saud, although bound by an agreement mediated by Britain not to attack the Ajman, was forced into attacking them. His compromised position led to vacillating military tactics, undermining his prestige in the eyes of both Britain and Najdi tribes, so that he was perceived as "almost powerless against the combined trading community of Kuwait and Qasim".[107] He managed to regain face by using non-coercive methods of negotiation. In 1918, for example, he affirmed an agreement initiated by Britain which allowed the Ajman to evacuate to Zubair and visit Kuwait for trading purposes.[108] Nevertheless the Ajman with Ibn Rashid continued to attack him, and the number of raids shows that Ibn Saud's territorial security was far from secure.[109]

It is evident that this tribal opposition was a persistent weakness in Ibn Saud's authority. It drained the coercive efforts of his tribal allies,

103 Private Papers, *Diary of Political Mission to Central Arabia, 1917–1918*, Vol. 2, Cairo to Riyadh, 13 April.

104 Private Papers, *Inward Correspondence*, Vol. 1, political agent, Basra to political agent, Kuwait, 18 August 1918, Political Agent, Kuwait to Philby 23 August 1918.

105 Wilson, "Relations".

106 Philby to Wilson, "Report on the Operation of the Nejd Mission", 2 November 1918, FO 371/4144.

107 Arab Bureau, Cairo to C. E. Wilson, 21 September 1917, FO/686/14. *Arab Bulletin*, No. 86 reported that Damascus–Kuwait caravans were still getting through. "It's common rumour that Ibn Saud is responsible for encouraging the trade, though whether as a means of increasing his revenue or as a result of an agreement with the Turk is a subject of doubt . . ." While Ibn Saud was supposed to be preventing caravan trade, his Buraida representative Ibn Muammar charged the illegal caravans 1 ginch per camel.

108 Cox to foreign office, 28 September 1917, including Harrison: *The Ajman Question*, FO 371/3060 hereinafter cited as Cox, *The Ajman Question*.

109 *Najd Report*, No. 122, L/P&S/10/2182/1913, Pts. 9 and 10.

preventing their energy from being used positively to extend his power. Britain was not interested in waiting until Ibn Saud resolved his internal social strife, for this hindered his active support of their interests. The Arab Bureau's view was that he had offered only token efforts, in 1916 through his son Turki, against the Al Rashid and Shammar. It did not consider that he might be avoiding such conflict to protect his future Ottoman relations. The India Office viewed Ibn Saud's focus on tribal power struggles as lack of judgement:

> Ibn Saud has been somewhat of a disappointment . . . [he] allowed himself to be drawn into a personal quarrel with the 'Ajman, in which he showed so little military strength that he had to be rescued by the Koweit forces, and so little political sagacity that he refused a favourable peace – thereby driving the Ajman into the arms of the Turks, against us.[110]

Obtaining supremacy over the tribes was Ibn Saud's priority, however, because coercive control over social groups was always the basis of his immediate political authority.

In late 1917, British policy focused on an attempt to have Ibn Saud effect a military strike against Hail, an assault which Britain perceived as an important "military diversion"[111] to prevent Ibn Rashid from helping the Ottomans to withstand the siege of Medina. To this end, Hamilton recommended that Ibn Saud be supplied with artillery and authorised to take Hail.[112] This potentially had great significance for Ibn Saud's authority, for by capturing Hail he would gain strategic control over all of central and northern Arabia. It seemed that Britain was willing to invest more heavily in Ibn Saud's authority. He would need such support, firstly, to execute this campaign, and secondly, to gain sufficient arms to make it

110 Cox, *The Ajman Question.*

111 Cox to foreign office, 28 July 1917, FO 371/3061/243246; R/15/2/38, political agent, Bahrain, to Baghdad, 7 and 9 December 1917.

112 Notes by Col Hamilton, political agent, Kuwait, B286, L/P&S/10/389. "The state of his finances did not admit of his maintaining anything like active operations in the field against Ibn Rashid" and he was near to being "of no further assistance" to Britain (Philby, "Report on the Operation of the Nejd Mission", p. 24, L/P&S/10/390). Ibn Saud was deeply disturbed about British intentions, and Government of India officials felt he had delivered "what amounts to an ultimatum to us . . . an intimation that non-compliance will involve a rupture of relations." (Government of India minute of 18 October 1918, L/P&S/10/389.)

worthwhile abandoning all pretence to the Ottomans that he abstained from participating in British aggression. Reviewing Ibn Saud's coercive capacity,[113] Philby recommended that he receive £50,000 a month over six months, and/or perhaps £5,000 immediately for "minor objectives achieved", ten thousand new rifles and heavy artillery to equip a 10,000-strong arm, so that "something big" could be achieved.[114]

Britain's desire to secure Hail thus enabled Ibn Saud to make fresh demands, such as the "absolute immunity of his territory" from Hashemite attacks on Khurma and the Utaiba; that British-controlled Shammar and Ajman sections be barred from his territories, and that the sheikh of Kuwait limit smuggling.[115] However, new developments in the progress of the war prevented Ibn Saud's attempt to amass such advantages. The capture of Palestine in December 1917 meant that Britain was victorious over the Ottomans in the Middle East, and thus the capture of Hail became strategically irrelevant, Wingate argued.[116] Wingate also advised strongly against arming Ibn Saud because he had experienced and distrusted intense revivalist movements such as that of the Ikhwan and because, as Hussein was the Arab Bureau's protégé, Ibn Saud's expansionism must be firmly checked.[117] Therefore Cairo responded,

> although the elimination of this Turkish center was very desirable we should not risk upsetting the present balance of power as between

113 The main objectives of the mission to Riyadh were to promote better relations between Hussein and Ibn Saud, and, in Cox's words, "to see the country and make proposals in accordance with military possibilities". (Troeller, p. 112.) See also "Notes for the Middle East Committee meeting" by J. Shuckburgh, 18 January 1918, No. 7664; FO 371/3394. For a discussion of British expectations, see Philby to political resident, Baghdad, 9 January 1918, (R/15/38) and Hogarth to Arab Bureau, Cairo, 10 January 1918, FO 882/9.

114 See "Notes for Middle East Committee Meeting" by J. Shuckburgh, India Office, 12 January 1918, L/P&S/10/389.

115 Political resident, Baghdad, to foreign office, 8 August 1918, FO 371/3390.

116 "[Wingate] believes Bin Rashid to be much weaker than he has been represented and does not regard the capture of Hail as an objective of sufficient importance to warrant paying Ibn Saud a 'blank cheque' for its accomplishment." (Shuckburgh, 10 January 1918, L/P&S/10/389.)

117 Agreement with this argument is found in: Hogarth to Wingate, 31 December 1917, FO 882/8; Wingate to foreign secretary, 23 December 1917, FO 882/8; Daniel Silverfarb, "The philby mission to Ibn Sa'ud, 1917–18", *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14 (1979); hereinafter cited as Silverfarb, "The Philby mission".

> the Sherif and Ibn Saud by largely increasing the fighting value of the latter's forces.[118]

It transpired that, after initial serious encouragement to take Hail, Ibn Saud was left once more to his own military resources which were insufficient and fragmented. This sudden loss of expected support shows that the development of the Ikhwan as an independent arm was fundamental to his subsequent success; but it was by avoiding the use of the Ikhwan at this moment that he effectivelyconserved it for later use.

The Al Saud–Hashemite rivalry and Ibn Saud's participation in the Arab revolt

Ibn Saud and Hussein were bitter rivals with quite different ambitions,[119] and Britain had a difficult task in reconciling its alliances with both, but "it [was] desirable to find a *modus vivendi*" that would induce both Arab parties to "turn their whole energies against the Turks".[120] However, despite Britain's economic and military leverage, this proved impossible. An interesting feature of Ibn Saud's diplomacy was his carefully judged dissociation from Hussein's wartime use of religious authority and nationalist agenda. One immediate reason for their ideological divergence was their differing leadership priorities, since tribal rifts forced on Ibn Saud the limited objective of securing his chieftaincy, while Hussein's quest for pan-Arab leadership involved undermining his rival's power, as the Baghdad authorities described thus:

> realising that he will never again after the war be in such a strong position as he is now, either tribally or financially, Sherif is bent on doing his utmost to weaken his rival both by discrediting Ibn Saud

118 FO 882/9, IS/18/11, private note of a meeting held at the residency, Cairo, 21 January 1918; P.P. Box XV/5, Hogarth to Wingate, 10 January 1918.

119 The Wahhabis first invaded Hijaz and captured Mecca in 1806. Numerous Hijazi attempts to control Najdi tribes, along with mutual raiding, intensified this conflict (Ibn Saud to Cox, 20 October 1916; FO 882/8; Wingate to foreign secretary, 23 December 1917, FO 371/3390). Vassiliev also cites raids by Ibn Saud against some tribes under Hussein's authority, especially in border areas. See p. 292.

120 Wingate to foreign secretary, 5 October 1917, FO 371/3601.

> in our eyes and achieving during the war such a prominent position for himself as Ibn Saud will never be able to challenge.[121]

Yet Ibn Saud for his part made it clear, according to Philby's reports, that he would never accept a status in Najd inferior to that of Hussein in Hijaz, but claimed an equal authority. He wrote to Cox in 1915:

> I contended that if he [Hussein] meant to be sincere and desired to be united with me and that we should work hand in hand, he should give me an undertaking and a solemn promise for the immunity of my territories and my subjects, and for abstention from trespassing in our limits . . . If his reply is in the affirmative and he acts loyally, no effort on my part will, please God, be spared to help him to the best of my ability.[122]

However, Ibn Saud also told Cox that his cooperative stance was aimed solely at expelling the Ottomans, not at supporting the revolt.[123] Britain had thus to put pressure on Ibn Saud to display even token support: it was "a cardinal fact of British policy in the Arabian peninsula to induce Ibn Saud to support the Sharifian rebellion."[124] Ibn Saud made a conciliatory gesture to Hussein, sending a gift of "camels and high-bred horses".[125] Later on, he expressed his fear to Cox that Hussein's successes might encourage the sharif to claim Najd, stressing that he would never tolerate such interference.[126] Thus when in September 1916 Hussein requested assistance, Ibn Saud responded that "assistance" was possible if Hussein gave his word to refrain from interfering in Najd.[127] This so angered Hussein that he replied that Ibn Saud's demand was "bereft of reason".[128]

Ibn Saud had predicted that Hussein would eventually demand submission to his rule, and indeed in November 1916 when Hussein

121 Cox to Government of India, 23 December 1917, L/P&S/10/2182, Pt. 6.
122 Abdul-Aziz ibn Rahman al-Faisal al Sa'ud to Percy Cox, 15 August 1916, L/P&S/10/387.
123 Cox to Arab Bureau, Cairo, 8 September 1916, FO 371/2769.
124 Troeller, p. 94.
125 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 29, 8 November 8 1916.
126 Viceroy to India Office, 26 February 1915, enclosing a letter from Ibn Saud, L/P&S/10/387.
127 Cox to Arab Bureau, Cairo, 8 September 1916, FO 371/2769.
128 Hussein to Ibn Saud, 5 September 1916, FO 371/2781.

proclaimed himself "King of All Arabs", he demanded that other Arab leaders recognise him as their sovereign. This demand caused a crisis of authority for Ibn Saud, for Cox had reassured him in October 1916 that Hussein had no "evil intentions" against his tribes or your territories,

> On the contrary HE regards your Excellency as his friend and co-adjutor; and as for ourselves *vis-à-vis* yourself and the Sherif, have we not our treaty with you in article one of which we have recognised you as independent ruler of your territories of Nejd?[129]

Certainly Ibn Saud feared that Britain might ultimately recognise Hussein as "King of All Arabs",[130] and he thus demanded the demarcation of Najd–Hijaz borders.[131] He repeatedly expressed his fear to Cox that the frequent failures in British bureaucratic communication might mean that those responsible for Hussein did not realise the extent of his ambitions, that "the representative of the British Government" who was actually conducting negotiations with the Sharif was "not acquainted with the position".[132] This comment shows a more acute wariness of British administrative compartmentalisation on Ibn Saud's part than on Hussein's, although it could not have been easy for Ibn Saud, "a Bedouin chief . . . to appreciate the hydra-headed political organism which made policy in the Middle East".[133]

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129 Cox to Ibn Saud, 18 October 1918, No. 4918, L/P&S/10/387.

130 As late as 1917, Cox was required to reassure Ibn Saud; he told him: "As regards the Sherif signing himself 'Malik al-Bilad al-Arabiyah', your statesmanship will I know cause you to agree with me that it is not worthwhile at this juncture raising this question between yourself and the Sherif. You can rest completely assured that [this title] has no meaning in reference to yourself." (Hon. Lt Col Sir P. Cox to HE Emir Abdul Aziz, 10 February 1917, L/P&S/10/388.)

131 Vassiliev, p. 293. Hussein proclaimed himself "King of All the Arabs" on 5 November 1916 (Troeller, p. 99). Because of the reports of considerable financial and military assistance to Hussein, Cox assured Ibn Saud at the Uqair Meeting (11 November), "The British Government had insisted on the Shereef making formal admission that he claimed no jurisdiction over other independent Arab leaders." See Committee of Imperial Defence (CID), "Historical Summary of Events in Territories of the Ottoman Empire, Russia and Arabia Affecting the British Position in the Persian Gulf, 1907–1928", L/P&S/18, p. 24 (Political and Secret Memoranda).

132 Ibn Saud to Cox, 20 July 1916 FO 882/8.

133 Troeller, p. 102.

Cox's supportive response to Ibn Saud shows that the Arab Bureau's endorsement of Hussein was counterbalanced by the India Office's disapproval of any Hashemite intervention in Najd, an example of how interdepartmental rivalry fragmented British policy towards the Middle East.[134] The political focus of the Iraqi officials of the India Office was naturally fixed upon regional tribal frictions affecting Gulf security: the last power figure they wanted to intervene in Najd was Hussein, whose links with world conflict could upset the local tribal "equilibrium of conflict".[135] To the India Office officials Hussein was less a British ally than an external influence who might siphon British aid away from Ibn Saud, diminish the security of the route to India, and provoke a backlash from the Al Saud against Britain and the Hashemites.

Thus the Government of India, via the placatory Cox, was content with Ibn Saud's minimal contribution to the revolt.[136] But its own policy conflicted with pressures from the high commissioner and foreign office officials to assist in the strategically important Hijaz.[137] However, the fact that Britain's various departments had in the end to accommodate one another's interests also worked in Ibn Saud's favour, for the Arab Bureau warned Hussein in 1917 against encroaching on Ibn Saud's treaty with Britain.[138] Already, Ibn Saud's new treaty was proving influential in protecting his sovereignty and security.

Another diplomatic problem for Ibn Saud was how far to participate militarily in the revolt in order to receive sufficient weaponry to increase

134 "If Anglo-French, Anglo-Arab and Anglo-Zionist relations contributed to the absence of a unified policy in the Middle East, so did interdepartmental rivalry." (Troeller, p. 73.)

135 B. C. Busch, *Britain, India and the Arabs, 1914–1921* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1967), p. 255.

136 Cox pointed out, "Central Arabia is practically inaccessible by land to any power but ours" and that Ibn Saud's help "would be no mean asset to the joint cause of us all." ("Memorandum on British Commitments to Bin Saud", 16 November 1918, No. 5120, L/P&S/10/2182, Pts. 7, 8.)

137 Policing the Red Sea, a vital link to the Suez Canal, with potential for staving off Ottoman action at Aden, made Hussein increasingly important. For a full explanation, see Gary Troeller, "Ibn Saud and Sharif Husain: a comparison in importance in the early years of the First World War", *Historical Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 627–33.

138 FO 882/3, AP/18/1, Memo by Cox regarding meeting at the residency, Cairo, 14 June 1917.

his local control. Taking the initiative on this issue, he discussed with Cox in November 1916 "cooperation with the Sharif or offensive action against Ibn Rashid".[139] Shortly after, at a meeting of the sheikhs of Kuwait, Muhammara and chiefs from al-Hasa and southern Iraq, Ibn Saud first publicly expressed support for Hussein's revolt in a speech "as spontaneous as it was unexpected",[140] in which he "urged all Arabs to join the standard to the Revolt".[141] However, at this same meeting Britain accepted that he would send no contingent to Hussein.[142] As reward for this "support towards the cause of the Sheriff" and cooperation, the Government of India conferred the honour of Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (KCIE) on Ibn Saud at the Kuwait Durbar on 20 November 1916.[143] Clearly it was out of an increased sense of the security of his rule that Ibn Saud had given his support, but this speech was his only material commitment to Hussein; henceforth his remarks on the subject were especially guarded.[144]

Ibn Saud's imposed isolation was ultimately of great benefit to his contest for power. It protected his religious authority from a damaging association with an attack on the Islamic empire and caliphate, and from the adverse criticisms of Indian Muslims, a section of international opinion with strong influence over his ally, Britain.[145] In fact, this unsullied

139 "Relations with Ibn Saud: Note prepared by the Arab Bureau, Iraq Section", undated, but *c.* 1917, B 252, L/P&S/10/388, p. 8; see also Silverfarb, "The Philby mission", p. 270.

140 P. Graves, *The Life of Sir Percy Cox* (London, Hutchinson, 1941), p. 214.

141 "Memorandum on Relations with Ibn Saud", 10 January 1917, No. 1458/35692, FO 371/3044; see also Antonius, pp. 205–6.

142 See Arabian Report, 20 November 1916, FO 371/2481.

143 See "Translation of Honourable Sir Percy Cox to Amir Abdul Aziz bin Abdur Rahman al-Faisal", 20 November 1916, L/P&S/10/388.

144 The *Arab Bulletin*, 14 June 1917, summed up Ibn Saud's position since the Kuwait Durbar: "Ibn Saud has neither so addressed Hussein as to imply recognition of his paramountcy, nor has ever sent his son or any of his followers to cooperate with the Sharifian armies."

145 The Indian group which endorsed Ibn Saud's invasion of the Hijaz, the Caliphate Committee, was divorced from mainstream Indian Muslim opinion. Concern for general Indian Muslim opinion generally moderated British policy, but Ibn Saud exploited this particular pressure group's endorsement to boost his legitimacy.

legitimacy brought him useful support from certain Indian Muslims later when annexing Hijaz in the name of Wahhabism.

Discretion and deployment: Ibn Saud's development of the Ikhwan movement

The origins of the Ikhwan movement and Ibn Saud's personal responsibility for it have been examined above. For five years, Ibn Saud had won no decisive victories against Ibn Rashid. However, gradually, religious fervour created a valuable striking force, famous for its ferocious conviction. This demonstrates that when the religious body of a state also becomes the state's coercive arm, it can develop as a powerful force within the sovereign structure:[146] for instance, the closeness of the Ikhwan settlements to the towns imposed discipline on the towns.[147] In addition to their natural appetite for battle, the Ikhwan did not fear death because in their view God approved their campaigns and death meant admission to paradise. Ibn Saud encouraged their jihad against his political enemies: thus, as executors for the Wahhabi cause they began to influence his foreign relations.

Traditionally, it was tribal allegiance, not boundaries, which defined the ruler's territory, but Wahhabism stressed the duty to expand the religious loyalty and boundaries outward, which exactly suited Ibn Saud's eventual plan to annex the Hijaz and Asir. Although the Ikhwan were the avid prosecutors of expansive proselytism, ultimately Ibn Saud recognised that their campaign must stop at the territorial borders where his ally, Britain, had security interests. This constraint suited Ibn Saud, who was not interested in obtaining international authority as caliph or as a pan-Arab leader, but it meant that the Ikhwan–Al Saud confederacy fostered an Ikhwan illusion that the scope of their state would continually expand.

146 "Unitarian Islam can endow one leader with sufficient legitimacy to overcome tribal fissipariousness and help set up a more effective state . . . Here, the men of religion become bureaucratic, ideological and judicial servants of the state." (Gellner, "Tribalism", p. 119.)

147 Such as al-Ghat-Ghat's location in relation to al-Muzahmiyya (Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 59).

A comparison between Ibn Saud and Hussein in this period shows that while both leaders used agendas to motivate their societies which were political pretexts to acquire power, Ibn Saud's society believed strongly in his agenda but Hussein's groups merely used nationalism as an excuse to satisfy their interests. Both agendas resulted in military cohesion; however, while Hussein's coercive strength won only a temporary political advantage, the concrete coercive cohesion that Ibn Saud secured became a permanent reality. Both leaders took advantage of a surge in social support, but Ibn Saud, in so doing, succeeded in altering the social structure to improve his executive control immensely. As mentioned before, the *hujar* were in effect military camps across the peninsula[148] enabling the Ikhwan to be highly mobile.[149]

Ibn Saud could not compete with Hussein's material incentives, but instead could offer spiritual rewards, which were "probably encouraged by him as a counterpoise to Sherif's expansion".[150] He reorganised and centralised his policy on *zakat* and mercenary payments, his ploy being not to pay the Ikhwan for each battle (although he cleverly exacted a small British subsidy for doing so) but to offer continual subsidy on four different levels. Thus, his tribes did not fight solely as hired soldiers as Hussein's did.[151]

The Ikhwan themselves had another socially cohesive function in Ibn Saud's "ideological deployment" of them as missionaries to extend the religious-political loyalty to his state. The reason why Britain was slow to recognise the forceful growth of the Ikhwan movement was that their infiltration of districts was subtle and was effected with local cooperation. Typically, a district with a historical tradition of Wahhabism would contact Ibn Saud and invite him to send a proselytising mission – possibly as a political subterfuge which showed dissatisfaction with the current overlord and a wish to ally with Ibn Saud's new coercive strength. One such example was the Abha district in Asir which was strategically important to Ibn Saud because of its Red Sea access. A campaign of

148 al-Zirikli, p. 70.

149 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, pp. 59–63.

150 See Wingate to foreign office, 23 December 1917, FO 371/3056.

151 It has been concluded by one Najdi historian that "until then their wealth and prosperity caused them to be puffed up with pride in themselves, and to boast that all the victories that had been won had been the outcome of their own prowess and virtue." (Wahbah, *Jazirat al-'Arab fi al-qarn al-'ishrin*, p. 264.)

proselytism[152] established good relations with al-Idrisi, and this eased Ibn Saud's expansion southward.[153] Such expansion followed a pattern in which the political and religious aspects of his governance and the interests of potential allies reinforced one another. This legitimised expansion of political power and alliances was spread further through raids against settled areas near important travel routes.[154]

However, the Ikhwan's menacing reputation could also negatively affect Ibn Saud's position by harming his leadership image in Britain's eyes. Thus Ibn Saud's separate acquisitive needs, both for an independent coercive arm and for the British subsidy, checked one other. It is not surprising that early in the growth of the Ikhwan movement Ibn Saud played down its military capabilities to Britain, and it was to his benefit that international awareness of his new coercive arm was slow to develop. As late as November 1917, the *Arab Bulletin* printed a report which originated from a neutral religious missionary, which described them as benign religious teachers for the spread of pure "religion". The abolition of all internal warfare was "one of its cardinal doctrines".[155] However, a month later it was noted that the Ikhwan were "numerous and increasing", and Hussein's fears of a Wahhabite epidemic were re-affirmed.[156] A rival leader, al-Idrisi, considered that the Ikhwan fearfully lacked "cohesion, organisation and tact" which alone could ensure the stability of such a movement. Inasmuch as they neither organised the country they took, nor controlled it, nor administered it along proper lines, their movement was "not likely to last long".[157]

152 Foreign secretary to Acting British Consul Mayers, 10 October 1926, FO 371/11423/E5796.

153 See Umm al-Qura, 7 January 1927 and CO 725/12/48021, Mayers to Chamberlain, 8 January 1927.

154 In 1919, Khalid ibn Lu'ay and the al-Ghat-Ghat dwellers raided Sharma and Dafina, villages sixty-five miles north of 'Ushayra and twenty-five miles east of the *hajj* route between Mecca and Medina. In 1920 Khalid raided Taif, Bisal and Mahani. According to British reports Ibn Saud had partially endorsed these raids, although his involvement was indirect. It seems his control over Khalid's forces was increasing but not complete.

155 "Report from Dr A. P. Harrison of the American Medical Mission, Bahrain, on a trip to Riyadh", *Arab Bulletin*, No. 70, 21 November 1917.

156 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 73, 16 December 1917.

157 al-Idrisi in conversation with Captain Faz-ul-din in February 1920, 24th Newsletter of 17 September 1920, FO 371/5101.

Britain was bound to perceive Ibn Saud's revival moment as a threat to Hussein's religious legitimacy, which was in turn crucial to Britain's challenge to the Ottoman empire, but it was Hussein who first realised that the Ikhwan were a threat to his authority and urged Britain to force Ibn Saud to abolish them.[158] In 1917 Faisal asserted to Lawrence that "eight out of every ten Najd Bedu follow the Akhwan . . . the Taif branch is rapidly winning over the tribes of the northern Yemen . . . one fourth of the Shammar have allied themselves to it . . ."[159]

The spread of the Ikhwan revivalism put doubt in Britain's mind about Ibn Saud's stability as an ally, and Wingate's stress on its dangers helped to discourage the arming of Ibn Saud: "expansion in its most militant form by means of the 'Ikhwan' is contrary to our [Britain's] interest and should be discouraged." He had seen many similar cases in the Sudan, he said. Britain could not afford to dilly-dally with this movement: "it must be crushed".[160]

British officials noted that other Arabian rulers shared their concerns about the new Al Saud–Ikhwan association,[161] and thus the Arab Bureau argued that Ibn Saud should be armed no further to assault Hail. Therefore, although the Ikhwan boosted Ibn Saud's military capacity, their very strength was one reason why Britain did not subsidise the Hail offensive which could have won Ibn Saud complete control of Najd. Yet ultimately the Ikhwan's proselytism proved more significant than the lack of weapons, building an irreversible social impetus of jihad. The Hashemites tried to convey this to Britain: "when his time comes [Ibn Saud] will direct the force of the Bedu in turn against the settled peoples of Arabia: taking first . . . Qasim, then Hail, then the Hejaz, then Iraq and Syria, he will impose everywhere the new doctrine".[162] Yet, despite these warnings, British policy did not substantially address the problem

158 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, pp. 20–1.

159 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 74, December 1917.

160 See Interdepartmental Committee on Eastern Questions, 12th minutes, 10 March 1919, FO 371/3390.

161 Major Cox noted that Sheikh Zaid, leader of the Hinawi element, played a major role in removing the Wahhabi influence from Buraimi and the Pirate Coast in 1870, and was very anxious about its reappearance (Major Cox to Government of India, 4 February 1916, L/P&S/20/FO31).

162 Hogarth to Wingate, January 1915, 1918, FO 882/13.

of the Ikhwan, "perhaps equating . . . their play-for-keeps method of warfare with that of the old time bedouins".[163]

The resurgence of social support for Ibn Saud and its effect on foreign intervention in Najd

Through the use of Wahhabi proselytism, Ibn Saud was able to extend his power over influential groups in Hail,[164] which in turn affected the scale of British intervention in Najd. Britain's victory in World War I made him realise that British rather than Ottoman intervention would ultimately affect the extent of his power,[165] and might curb his attempts to extend his support in Hail. Ibn Rashid's emissary told the British consul in Jeddah that Ibn Saud's policy toward the Shammar was to "gradually . . . convert them to Wahhabism and thus win them over to his cause".[166] An increasing number of Shammar surrendered to him,[167] and this illustrates most clearly that religious ideology affected the cohesive allegiance of the Shammar which Ibn Saud had previously been unable to win by force or material persuasion.

Because of this increased support, Ibn Saud gradually began to resolve previous frictions with influential tribes, and expanding social support for him between 1917 and 1925 assisted in the military build-up to his conquest of Hail. Local tribal conflicts enabled him gradually to attract allegiance from small, conquered tribal sections: thus, he "managed to erode the power of his rivals and to establish a power basis of his own in each arena".[168]

The decline of the increasingly decadent Al Rashid and its loyalty from the Shammar also illustrated that its traditional tribal bonds and

163 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 95.

164 CCB to foreign office, 9 July 1918, FO 371/3390 and Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 309.

165 In September 1917 a Najdi mission was sent to Damascus for discussions with the Ottomans, and shortly afterwards Ibn Saud visited the British in Basra. Presumably predicting a British victory, he confiscated 700 camels bound for the Ottomans and gave them to the British in Kuwait (Vassiliev, p. 292).

166 C. E. Wilson to Arab Bureau, Cairo, interview with Muhammad Mughraibi al-Futaih, 19 December 1918, L/P&S/10/765, P7134.

167 Major Cox to secretary of state for India, 22 October 1917, FO 371/3057.

168 Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, p. 70.

control had not withstood the severe military and economic pressures of World War I.[169] With the defeat of their Ottoman allies, many Shammar factions disintegrated[170] and, harassed by Turki al-Saud's forces as well as by raids mounted by the Mutairi, important Shammar factions turned to Britain,[171] which then planned to create a cohesive confederation of the Ruwalla, Shammar and Dhafir.[172] It was this British scheme to construct a social base to challenge Ibn Saud's power which immediately motivated his conquest of Hail; also, he was particularly interested in controlling the Ruwalla, whose territory lay beyond Hail.[173]

The political fragility of Hail now made it the centre of a battle for control between Hussein and Ibn Saud, a strategic substitute for military confrontation in their own territories. Hussein had competed with Ibn Saud to control Hail by securing an alliance with Ibn Rashid in 1918, in which the latter acknowledged Hussein's sovereignty.[174] It was the prospect of a concerted al-Rashid–Hashemite alliance against Ibn Saud which made it essential for him to take Hail as soon as possible.

The threat to Ibn Saud's regional authority increased further when Cairo officials canvassed for a wide suzerainty title for Hussein in exchange for his wartime services. Influenced by the Cairo office policy,[175] the Middle East committee of the war Cabinet reversed its plan to assist Ibn

169 Railway sabotage prevented the increase of arms supplies to Ibn Rashid. He tried to free the railway by attacking the Unaiza, through whose territory it ran, but was badly defeated (*Arab Bulletin*, No. 91, 4 June 1918).

170 See Gertrude Bell's letter of 7 March 1917 in Lady G. Bell, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1939), Vol. 2, pp. 335–40. See also *Arab Bulletin*, No. 57, 29 July 1917.

171 In particular Ibn Rashid's included Saud ibn Subhan of the important Aslam section, and the Sinjara section.

172 Major Cox wanted Ibn Subhan to lead a confederacy of Shammar, Ruwalla and Dhafir.

173 The Shammar chieftaincy encompassed caravan routes to Syria, Kuwait and Hijaz. It bordered the territory of al-Jawf, which led to the Syrian desert and had been under Hail's control. As the Rashidi state weakened, these routes fell under the Ruwalla's power – one encouragement for Ibn Saud to fight for Hail was the possibility of controlling the whole of central Arabia.

174 See a copy of an agreement between Ibn Rashid and the sharif, dated Dhu'l-Qa'da 1336 (July 1918), FO 882/8.

175 The war Cabinet was affected by praise for Hussein in the war office memo of 21 January and criticism of the Al Saud, quoted in Silverfarb, "The Philby Mission", p. 278. See also Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 21–2.

Saud in "military operations on a grand scale".[176] However, Ibn Saud still enjoyed British support from officials in Baghdad, who did not wish to alienate him,[177] and who had thus rebuffed Ibn Rashid's approaches in 1919.[178] However, when in 1919 the Ikhwan defeated Hussein's troops at Turaba, stationed there in an attempt to retain Hashemite control over nearby Khurma, the strategic gateway from Najd to Hijaz, Cairo officials and the war office looked to Ibn Rashid as a traditional counterbalance to Wahhabite expansion.[179] A regular concern for British political agents in this period was that Ibn Saud was losing control over the Ikhwan.[180] In the event, Britain's proposed Shammar-led confederation fell apart because its newly allied Shammar sections, receiving insufficient material incentives,[181] realigned with the Ajman and renewed hostilities against Ibn Saud's Mutair in 1918. This escalated tribal conflict was another factor which precipitated Ibn Saud's direct attack on Hail.

Several factors aided Ibn Saud's attack: firstly, the initiative of Philby, with his intense "Indian and Mesopotamian standpoint".[182] While Philby had to comply with the war Cabinet's decision not to arm Ibn Saud to assault Hail,[183] in fact the common pattern of interdepartmental

176 Wingate to foreign secretary, 3 December 1917, FO 371/1917.

177 These officials still viewed Ibn Rashid as a pro-Ottoman enemy. "Our object is to eliminate Ibn Rashid either by winning him over or crushing him," Cox commented in 1917. See Cox, *aide-mémoire* quoted in Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, p. 33; no reference given.

178 Ibn Rashid had previously considered suing for peace but had rejected Ibn Saud's terms. At this time Ibn Rashid had submitted to Hussein, so he was no longer a threat to British security, and it is peculiar that British Mesopotamia officials continued to encourage Ibn Saud to attack him. The most convincing interpretation is that this was not considered part of the allied war effort, but rather the conclusion of Ibn Saud's territorial war with the Al Rashid.

179 Gen Allenby to foreign secretary, 8 June 1919, L/P&S/10/65.

180 Capt Bray to the India Office, 28 July 1919, FO 371/4147 and Report on the Ikhwan, 13 May 1919, FO 371/4146.

181 Philby selected a British ally among the Shammar, Ibn Tawalla, without informing him that this alliance was intended to attack Ibn Rashid. Possibly intimidated by the idea of a confrontation with Ibn Rashid, he ultimately refused assistance (Philby to Wilson, "Report on the Operation of the Nejd Mission", 2 November 1918, FO 371/4144); hereinafter cited as Philby, "The Nejd mission".

182 See private note of a meeting held at the residency, Cairo, 21 January 1918, FO 882/9, IS/18/11. See also Hogarth to Wingate, 10 January 1918, Wingate Private Papers, Vol. XV/5.

183 In March 1918, Cox instructed Philby to inform Ibn Saud that Britain would supply him with only 1,000 rifles.

communication failures enabled Philby to subvert his superiors' instructions and supply assistance. In fact, Cox, assuming that Ibn Saud lacked sufficient weaponry to attack independently, simply told Philby that there was "no pressing necessity to press him unduly" to attack.[184]

At the same time as Ibn Saud was planning his assault on Hail in northern Najd, he also attacked Khurma, the strategic gateway to Hijaz. He took the risk that the initiation of simultaneous aggression on two fronts, Khurma and Hail, would either escape international criticism or else demonstrate emphatically to the world his expanding power. However, the poor international response to his attack on Khurma led him to delay attacking Hail.[185] The fact that the Khurma inhabitants were under pressure from Hussein to revoke their newly-adopted Wahhabism made it a priority for Ibn Saud to intervene in his role as a Wahhabi leader.[186] He was particularly cautious since in September 1918, at a conference at Shaqra, the Ikhwan leaders had criticised his wish to make the Hail attack his first objective,[187] for this implied that his greatest priority was not to defend Wahhabis under threat in Khurma. The fact that the Ikhwan did not themselves rely on Western power incentives made them Ibn Saud's best weapon, but it took considerable statesmanship on his behalf to redirect their goal to attacking Hail.

He began the campaign for Hail in the summer of 1917 by blockading the Rashidi trade route. This was effective, compelling Ibn Rashid to negotiate over the future of his chieftaincy in order to end the blockade.[188] The terms which Ibn Saud exacted enabled him substantially to weaken the Al Rashid control over tribes and groups in Hail: Ibn Rashid accepted Ibn Saud's control over the important Ajman, Utaiba and Harb tribes.[189]

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184 Cox to foreign office R/15/5/101, 9 March 1918.

185 "In September 1918 the Ikhwan moved with their flags towards Hail. The Najdis had approximately 5,000 men. Meanwhile, there was an incident in Khurmah, and Hussein made a peace treaty with Hail which upset Ibn Saud. [Due to Khurmah] . . . the British decided that Ibn Saud's victory in Hail would create a negative reaction in Hijaz. So they ordered the Mission to come back and Ibn Saud was very angry." (Vassiliev, p. 292.)

186 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 100, 20 August 1918.

187 Binua Mishan, *'Abdul-'Aziz: sirat batal wa mawlid mamlaka* (Beirut, Dar al-Katib al-'Arabi, 1965), pp. 44–6.

188 Cox to Cairo, 12 September 1917, FO 371/3057 and Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, pp. 59–61.

189 Siddiq Hassan to resident, Bushire, 15 September 1919, R/15/2/34.

Since these were tribes which Hussein had recently aspired to control, this marked a major gain for Ibn Saud in preventing Hussein's Cairo-backed attempt to extend his suzerainty into northern Najd. Most importantly, Ibn Saud's terms stated that tribes in Al Rashid territory must be allowed to convert to Wahhabism if they wished. Thus, Ibn Saud set his forces of indoctrination in place, to extend his authority. The exhausted Ibn Rashid, simply to gain short-term relief from blockade, had conceded to Ibn Saud a substantial, permanent control over his territory.

The support of groups within Hail next became crucial to Ibn Saud: the notables and ulema gradually began to rely on him to restore order and trade within the declining Al Rashid domain. They had been deprived of basic essentials, a situation which had been created by his own coercive blockade and had now combined with the religious fervour he had spread, and reinforced his support there. In 1920, Cox calculated that most of the Shammar and two-thirds of the Hail townspeople supported Ibn Saud.[190]

Ibn Saud knew that Hail was strategically and politically vulnerable enough to enable him to obtain more control than Ibn Rashid had formally conceded. Thus he requested a broad popular affirmation of his power from the "notables of Hail and the sheikhs of the Shammar".[191] Consequently, through an agreement drafted by a deputation of Hail notables, Ibn Saud assumed all responsibility for Hail foreign policy.[192] But Ibn Saud's attempt to engineer a coup in Hail still could not go forward, because of opposition from a section of Shammar near Iraq who, in an attempt to restore Al Rashid power,[193] used force to crush the pro-Saudi group in Hail in 1920.[194] Although support for Ibn Saud in Hail continued to grow in 1920, when three expeditions won over more

190 See Despatch of 16 May 1920, L/P&S/10/765, Captain G. S. De Gaury to political resident, Bushire, "Events Prior to the End of the Ibn Rashid Rule at Hai'l 1921", n.d., L/P&S/12/2082.

191 Chamberlain to Clayton, April 1914, 1927, FO 371/12245.

192 Although the treaty specified complete local autonomy, other clauses stated that the Al Rashid would not be allowed to develop foreign contacts or conclude foreign treaties.

193 Dari ibn Fuhaid al-Rashid, *Nubdha tarikhiyya 'an Najd* (Riyadh, Dar al-Yamama, 1966), pp. 159–68; Hamza, *Qalb jazirat al-'Arab*, pp. 347–9.

194 See memorandum of the political situation in Nejd by H. R. P. Dickson, 12 August 1920, FO 371/5065.

Shammar sections, it was not enough to combat Ibn Rashid's remaining well-equipped force of about 9,000 men.

It was at this point that Ibn Saud used his strongest asset, the Ikhwan. Mobilising al-Dawish's forces, he besieged the fortified city[195] and crushingly defeated a Shammar counter-attack in 1921. Thus, overwhelming coercive strength enabled Ibn Saud to exact the ultimate condition for armistice:[196] his direct assumption of Ibn Rashid's chieftaincy. When Hail surrendered in 1921,[197] Ibn Saud had secured his complete pre-eminence over north-eastern Arabia.

At the beginning of this period (1915–18), it was argued that "'Abd al-'Aziz had conquered a nation but he had not yet learned how effectively to rule and govern it."[198] Even in late 1916 Ibn Saud's leadership was still not strong enough. He had annoyed Britain by his failure to enforce the blockade and his obsession with resolving internal tribal strife, and had soured his long friendship with the al-Sabah family in Kuwait. Ibn Saud's energetic military coalitions still could not sustain political cohesion, and he lacked sufficient British military assistance to defeat the Ottoman-backed Al Rashid. He responded strongly with a positive strategy to combat societal fragmentation, by engineering a new Wahhabi state based on an ideological model sufficiently familiar and appealing to his society to create societal cohesion and dynamic motivation to fulfil his goals for power. Ibn Saud cleverly promoted to his society an expanding model of state, the *umma*, and thereby, unlike Hussein, developed and motivated an authentic, indigenous military movement in the Ikhwan.

He thus transformed his leadership image from that of charismatic commander to that of an imam of a Wahhabi revival. He became a traditional Weberian ruler presenting social innovations, the *hujar*, as

195 Political resident, Kuwait, to political resident Bahrain, 25 April 1921 (covering Ibn Saud's letter to Salim, April 10 and 16), R/15/2/76; Salah al-Din al-Mukhtar, *Tarikh al-mamlaka al-'Arabiyya al-Sa'udiyya* (Beirut, Dar al-Hayat, 1958), pp. 232–3 (hereinafter cited as al-Mukhtar); al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, pp. 272–4.

196 Initially Ibn Rashid offered to abide by Saudi peace conditions outlined in 1920. Ibn Saud refused: "The rule of slaves and women at Hail is unbearable." (al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, pp. 234–5.)

197 *Ibid.*, pp. 274–84. For an account of the collapse of the Rashidi state, see al-Rasheed.

198 Goldrup, "Saudi Arabia", p. 105.

tradition.[199] Astutely, he separated the state religious apparatus from his personal leadership, delegating proselytising-coercive functions to a distinct section of the society. The Ikhwan's diminished emphasis on tribal bonds became Ibn Saud's compensation for his lack of a distinct tribal arm; further, Wahhabism ultimately proved effective in converting tribes such as the Shammar or Ajman, which would otherwise have had immovable loyalties. His unifying religious ideology overwhelmed the norms of *maslaha* and *asabiyya*, while retaining a sufficient continuity of tribal norms to allow him to effect his social restructuring.[200]

This Saudi–Wahhabi integration of secular and religious control affirmed Ibn Saud's sovereignty and added legitimacy to his control, permitting a more positive state planning, so that he could extend his capabilities outward into the international arena.

Ibn Saud displayed a developed sophistication in managing his foreign policy, steering his strategy between the Great Powers' alternating neglect and close attention. He secured the advantages of a new Saudi–British treaty in 1915, which guaranteed his security and increased his prestige.[201] Britain was mistaken in its hope that its qualified support would induce him to cooperate with Hussein; yet British aid still boosted Ibn Saud's power substantially at a regional level. He successfully managed to avoid openly endorsing Hussein's rebellion against the Islamic empire, and thus avoided the risk of alienating the opinions of Muslims internationally, or of endorsing Hussein's brand of Islam which his own society viewed as impure.

His revivalist militia had triggered British reservations about his growing power, but he was relatively successful in underplaying his military capacity, and reserving resources from British assistance instead of squandering them on short-term British objectives. Another reason

199 "Rather than considering themselves as the proponents of a new sect of Islam, the Ikhwan felt that they had embraced Islam much as had their forefathers almost fifteen hundred years earlier, and their submission to it was no less complete and no less enthusiastic." See Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 31.

200 Philby, "The Nejd mission", p. 1.

201 "This treaty aimed at securing his existing political assets – Nejd, Hasa, Qatif, and their dependencies . . . Once again, Saudi policy contrasted with Sharif Husain's political and territorial ambitions, as stated in his correspondence with McMahon." See Jacob Goldberg, *The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia, the Formative Years, 1902–1918* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1986), p. 183.

why his coercive capacity survived the war years may have been because he was not challenged by a sufficiently formidable opponent. Even so, while Hussein's enhanced tribal support at this time was highly tenuous, Ibn Saud succeeded in building a solid, genuine, dynamic coercive force. His capture of Hail was a landmark in the extension of Saudi control over Najd.[202]

Ibn Saud's earlier difficulty in securing a British alliance undoubtedly made him aware from the outset of the determined self-interest which motivated Britain and thus, unlike Hussein, he was not too ready to believe in the long-term consistency of British support for his power. Notably, the new strengthened structure of Ibn Saud's state which developed in this period did not arise in reaction to alien ideological models or foreign intervention, but from his determined pursuit of an independent and original religious-political agenda, organised around traditional values and an awareness of the natural limits of his authority. Once he had irrevocably confirmed his internal social control, he was ready for expansion into Hijaz and Asir; he had made his authority strong enough to orchestrate his associated groups for a new phase of expansion and unity in Arabia.

202 The Kuwait political agent noted in 1917 that for Ibn Saud the capture of Hail was a very big matter. "He and his forebears have been fighting for the past 40 years with this object in view, the net result being nil." (FO 371/3057.)

PART III

THE POSTWAR CONTEST FOR AUTHORITY 1919–24

5

The final struggle for power: Ibn Saud's success in Hijaz and the end of Sharif Hussein's rule

The aim of this chapter is to compare and contrast the various constituents of the authority of Hussein and Ibn Saud in the period following World War I and the Arab revolt.[1] The exploitation of these sources of authority (religious, social, coercive) and of British assistance, ultimately determined the contest for paramount authority in Arabia. In particular, the Khurma dispute was politically important because it showed how two vital pillars of leadership in Arabia – religious authority and coercive force – were used or misused by Hussein and Ibn Saud in their rivalry for possession of Hijaz. Each leader's effectiveness as a statesman in conducting postwar relations with Britain via treaties and conferences, combined with Britain's aim of securing strategic territories such as Aqaba and defining the Najd–Iraq border, also determined the final outcome of their contest for power. Ibn Saud's expanding support and Hussein's rapidly diminishing support among their particular associated groups proved essential in providing Ibn Saud with the social, ideological and religious consensus to become the paramount authority in Arabia. For Hussein, the postwar period created a crisis by making it vital for him to shift his political focus to regenerate the strong association between the variables of his indigenous authority, that is his religious, political and popular support. The question was whether he would be able to effect this shift in order to retain the limited authority of his age-old dynasty.

Ibn Saud and Hussein's postwar use of social support

Since Ibn Saud had by then gained control over several groups in Najd, he was free to plan his state structure and expansionist strategies.

1 The negotiation of the surrender of the Turkish garrison holding out in Yemen was in December 1918.

To give material support to his growing leadership, and prevent endemic fragmentation, it was essential that he should affirm a more developed and central administration while his rule still had this extraordinarily cohesive social consent. He also needed to secure his control over newly conquered territories through some centralising strategy, to incorporate his new groups and reinforce their obedience.

The new economic aspect of Ibn Saud's state structure strengthened his ideological and territorial goals. The ascetic ethos and subsidisation of the Ikhwan settlements removed this section of society's struggle for daily survival and allowed them to prosecute the ideological objectives of Ibn Saud's state. Nonetheless he was still careful to cater for the acquisitive tribal ethos. Until 1920 his liberal allowances of booty and low taxation had enhanced his chieftaincy image with discontented sections.[2] In the postwar era Ibn Saud eventually found himself without British subsidisation which had proved helpful in providing incentives for his society. Thus one motive for annexing the Hijaz was financial: the need to increase state revenues through revenues from Hijazi trade and the hajj.[3]

Ibn Saud had succeeded in attracting his society to a centralising model of rule with which his social groups felt an affinity. The model incorporated the traditional tribal ethos and a measure of tribal autonomy; thus he created a postwar social cohesion unprecedented in Najd. Significantly, his centralising system was able to develop uninfluenced by foreign intervention and the externally applied models of state which had altered Hussein's indigenous model of state:

> The rudiments of the chieftaincy were not abolished, and its segments were intact, but they were channelled into a unifying movement for conquest. In fact, under these circumstances tribal power and the tribal value system were unprecedentedly salient in the Saudi state.[4]

Ibn Saud largely resolved this tribal–central dichotomy through a combination of family rule, enforced religious norms and centralised economy.

2 He also paid the salaries of all the preachers – "many hundreds of them" – according to Faisal; see *Arab Bulletin*, No. 74, 24 December 1917.

3 Ryan to Henderson, 4 March 1931, L/P&S/12/2073. However, money was not a major requirement for the Ikhwan.

4 Kostiner, "Tribe and state formation", p. 229.

For instance, "the bearers of the religious call were also instrumental in collecting taxes and then redistributing them in a way which was gradually to strengthen the 'legitimate' political authority".[5] In the early 1920s he strengthened the state attributes of his chieftaincy through a new familial network of town governors and thus united the Khaldunian "core" and "periphery" of the state.[6] Furthermore, by using dynastic intermarriage and frequent divorce, Ibn Saud bound many tribes to his governance and subdued the provinces[7] so that the traditional tribal loyalty to blood ties was extended, rather than altered, by his new strategy of centralisation.

His centralisation process also exploited an ostensibly more traditional system than Hussein's, a fully consultative, confederated tribal form of decision-making which suited the "distinctiveness and a certain degree of autonomy [which] are basic features of any tribe".[8] As a result, tribal values prevailed in Ibn Sa'ud's polity; they suited the patrimonial region, which left the old social structure intact."[9] For instance when embarking upon a policy, he often publicly emphasised the collective nature of the decision.[10] By using such consultation Ibn Saud avoided creating a rudimentary and inappropriate Western bureaucratic structure such as Hussein's postwar system, and gained much flexibility through maintaining the existing tribal autonomy. But the process of consultation had its costs, and Ibn Saud's centralising economic policies sometimes militated against his society's wishes as when in 1923 he tried to force Najdi tribes to relocate their trading activities away from Kuwait to the port of al-Hasa which he wanted to make the new centre of Najdi trade. But generally, the absence of bureaucracy doubtless mitigated the traditional tribal opposition to central dominance.

The structure of Ibn Saud's expansive coercive forces also pleased his tribes since essential tribal distinctions were maintained. Distinct

5 Ghassan Salamé, "'Strong' and 'weak' states: a qualified return to the *Muqaddimah*", *The Foundations of the Arab State*, ed. Ghassan Salamé (London, Croom Helm, 1987), p. 214; hereinafter cited as Salamé.

6 According to Ibn Khaldun, "the degree to which the centre is immune . . . plays a pivotal role in the emergence of the state and later in its persistence and unavoidable decay." *Ibid.*

7 H. St John Philby, *The Heart of Arabia* (New York, G. P. Puttnam's Sons, 1923), pp. 293–4.

8 Kostiner, "Tribe and state formation", p. 235.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 237.

10 See Note by G. L. Bell, Baghdad, 23 February 1920, L/P&S/10/391.

Saudi-controlled tribes, such as the Utaiba and Subai near Khurma, retained their distinct identity in the subsequent occupation of territory. Therefore, the model of leadership which Ibn Saud projected was that of a chieftaincy engaged in territorial expansion, and his organisation of coercive forces fitted the expectations of his society. Ibn Saud was deeply aware of this, as he showed during the talks of the Clayton Mission when he pointed out that "his authority in Najd rested entirely on his personal ascendancy over his subjects and that the reversal of a decision which he had published as final would mean a greater risk to his prestige than he was prepared to run . . ."[11] As Ibn Saud pointed out, he was the individual in whom all the strands of sociopolitical cohesion joined. Society regarded him as both the leader of the Ikhwan and the defender of the traditional élites, and as the sole negotiator of foreign policy with Britain. Thus it was also because he made himself the executive focus of social interests – religious, commercial and coercive – that he obtained the paramount leadership of Arabia.

An examination of Hussein's use of social support to bolster his postwar authority reveals his major difficulty: the need to create a new engine of power tailored to the postwar reality of his self-contained sovereignty. He needed to concede that his society's previous collusion in the Arab revolt had been motivated by an evolved nationalistic agenda, and that this adopted cohesive mechanism of state was no longer viable. Further, because "an important . . . aspect of ideology is the question, 'Who is the enemy?' against whom a given ideology is directed,"[12] Hussein's society no longer had an enemy on which to focus, and therefore turned once more to the satisfaction of its own interests:

> One reason why the Hashemite state did not develop beyond a kind of tribal confederacy was circumstantial pressure. During the crucial period of no more than one and a half years, the leaders were busy fighting, while the state's demography and territories

11 See memorandum No. 3 of 14 October 1925, in Annexure 4 of *Report by Sir Gilbert Clayton on his Mission to Negotiate Certain Agreements with the Sultan of Nejd* (Colonial Office, February 1926, L/P&S/10/1165).

12 Nikki R. Keddie, "Post-colonial Muslim societies", *State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan*, ed. Fred Halliday and Hamza Alavi (London, Macmillan Education, 1988), p. 13; hereinafter cited as Keddie, "Post-colonial Muslim societies"

> were constantly changing . . . On the other hand, the Hashemites made virtually no attempt – indeed, were not even reported to harbour designs – to develop a unified and coherent state.[13]

The focus of any leader's power structure, and the structure of his administration, is an ideological belief system. Reciprocity of political vision offered a stable basis for government, and the challenge for Hussein was to try to sustain social satisfaction through a practical reconstruction of his state once his society's expectations of his rule inevitably reverted to the norms of traditional leadership. In this period the evident breakdown of law and order and Hussein's poor societal administration signalled that the leader and society were ideologically at odds. By 1924 tribal unrest had been brewing in the Hijaz for five years, and a telling fact about Hussein's fall from power is that, when Hijaz was invaded, the Colonial Office was unable to decide from the first reports whether this was an Ikhwan attack, or an internal revolution against Hussein.[14] This was because Hussein's new punitive economic measures had alienated the commercially oriented urban centres with their settled tribes, while the ideological appeal of Wahhabism had converted many of his 500,000 bedouin, although it is difficult to assess the degree of true conversion (rather than conversion for reasons of economic expediency).[15]

The first crisis for Hussein's post-revolt administration was the diminution of British wartime subsidies, which forced him to implement harsh and unpopular financial policies to develop new economic resources. It is widely agreed that corruption and severe financial mismanagement characterised the Hijazi state's postwar economy. Yet the severe financial difficulties suffered by the post-revolt Hijaz administration are somewhat puzzling, since the Allies had injected enormous sums during the revolt

13 Kostiner's view here seems balanced and valid, accommodating both the pressures on the Hashemites and their inadequacies as a ruling group (Kostiner, "The Hashemite 'Tribal Confederacy'", p. 140).

14 FO to Reader Bullard, HM Consul at Jeddah, 12 September 1924, No. 3746 (L/P & S/10/3665 Pt. 1).

15 The extent of true conversion is difficult to assess because, for instance, as early as 1921 it was noted that the tribes, especially in the Medina region, were *both* discontented with Hussein's rule and also desired "the opportunity of fighting and pillage." (Jeddah to foreign secretary, 10 December 1921, CO 727/4.)

(based on a monthly stipend of £200,000 from 1916 to 1919, £7,600,000 in gold alone was received, also with plentiful munitions).[16]

It was clear that if, during the postwar economic decline, Hussein chose to make greater financial demands on his society it would cause a deeper rift. Nevertheless he decided to impose forced loans, take percentages from the merchants' trade, and raise the camel rental rate considerably.[17] Another great source of economic discontent among certain tribes was that Ali and Abdallah, having administered their personal funds badly, were heavily in debt to the tribes.[18] Despite Hussein's tough economic strategies, he simultaneously became apparently impecunious; there had been a drastic reduction since 1916 of his traditional source of revenue from the hajj.[19]

Since Hussein could no longer afford to pay the tribes their full subventions, this distortion of the customary tribute and taxation system undermined the traditional method of sustaining his leadership, and encouraged a popular rejection of Hussein's economic system. (Traditional in the sense that the Turks had operated a system of bribery to keep tribal peace, not necessarily a Hijazi tradition.)[20] The tribes deeply

16 A. J. Toynbee, "The Islamic world since the peace settlement", *Survey of International Affairs*, Oxford, (1925), part (v): *The Resurrection of Wahhabi Power in the Arabian Peninsula and the Fall of the House of Hashim*. Toynbee quotes amounts admitted in statements in the British House of Lords and the House of Commons in 1922.

17 This act had the effect of shrinking revenues further as it made the cost of the pilgrimage prohibitive for thousands, and it was the pilgrimage which provided the greatest percentage of the sharif of Mecca's income. Also, some believed that he deliberately tried to put off pilgrims, so that he could "conceal his inability to control the Bedouin and safeguard the routes" and thus had "recourse to these indirect measures." (*Jeddah Report* of 10 September 1920, FO 371/5243.)

18 Ali obtained forcible loans from merchants and landowners at Medina in 1920 (*Report* from Capt Mian Amsir-ud-Din Ahmad for the period to 29 July 1920, FO 686/26).

19 The details of Hussein's private fortune are uncertain. There are widespread allegations that he fleeced the merchants, but such funds were not used for the public good. The Hashemites lost a good deal following Ibn Saud's encroachment on the Hijaz. The FO files from 1926 to the early 1930s have numerous papers on the attempt to claim compensation (FO 371 files). It is generally agreed that much of the fortune in gold paid by the British to the Hashemite forces is unaccounted for.

20 In 1922, for example, it was observed that Unaiza, Mutair and Hautaim were increasingly interested in *mudayana* (proselytising incentives, i.e. financial assistance) as excuse for raid and pillage. "Hostility to King Hussein in general

resented Hussein's increasing financial demands and might well have taken military action against him, diminishing popular consent to his rule, and jeopardising his own security. As well as ending payment of bedouin stipends for good behaviour, Hussein strictly rationed their purchases so that "many a Jeddah merchant who before the war did a steady business among the tribes" was ruined. Nor did the tribesmen on the Medina road, "independent and inflammable", appreciate the substitution of boycott for subsidy.[21]

Hussein's further callous mismanagement of social administration also eroded support. At one point, all Jeddah's food and water, even water for the hospital, was diverted for the use of Amir Ali and his bedouin entourage.[22] Such alienation of social support enabled Ibn Saud to assert that disturbances expressed a restless social discontent generated by Hussein's own domestic policy:

> Bin Saud long ago warned Government that Hijaz was full of dissatisfied bedouin . . . taking advantage of the hopeless state of King Hussein's Government to raid, rob and loot . . . the majority [of whom] care nothing for either King Hussein or [Ibn Saud].[23]

Hussein's administrative problems did not derive from a lack of centralised government. (For instance, Ibn Saud is said to have kept his country's treasury in his saddlebag.)[24] Indeed, Hussein's rudimentary postwar administrative structure was modelled on a European form of political organisation,[25] but he applied this form in a context where

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[is] either because he does not pay tribal subsidies or as in the case of Farhan al-'Eida of Khobar because of old scores. Abdullah annexed Farhan's war subsidy during the latter part of the War." (Jeddah to foreign office, 7 April 1922, CO 727/4.)

21 See "Economic and Financial Conditions in Hedjaz", 31 October 1923, FO 141/812.

22 The water resources were commandeered by Ali's "escort" of "wild bedouin". Even the British agency was restricted to one barrel a day until strong protests returned the service to normal (Report of British agent at Jeddah, 14 August 1920, FO 371/5423).

23 R/15/1/557, 25 June 1920.

24 Philby, *Arabian Jubilee*, p. 49. Admittedly Philby's point here was to illustrate the scantiness of Ibn Saud's economic resources.

25 "I have organised out of the Ministries elementary sorts of offices necessary for the time being as follows: Premier's Office/Grand Qadi's Office/Foreign Office (very small) [*sic*]/Interior (near the same way) [*sic*]/Finance, including Customs/Public Works/Education/Wakfs/War Office, including Ports and Harbours staff/posts

"neither rulers nor ruled may have any access to the relevant skills".[26] In contrast, the religious and non-nationalistic model through which Ibn Saud motivated his groups in the period had socially appealing elements of equality and tribal consultation.[27] One reason why Hussein's externally derived form of administration was badly managed was because he lost the executive backbone of his regime, his sons Faisal and Abdallah, to the mandates. His earlier dependence on his sons subsequently greatly diminished his capacity for organising a central administration.

Later in the postwar period, Hussein's subjects viewed him as neglectful of the socio-economic situation, and this neglect was the immediate factor which destroyed the image of his leadership. In 1921 Amir Faisal noted that the lack of funds severely hampered the local government and claimed, "the Government is in need of £700,000, including the Wakfs. This is what the Turks used . . . to spend. At the present time the total income of the country does not exceed £20,000 annually."[28] Hussein had little hope of styling himself as the leader of a patrimonial polity[29] composed of his confederated tribes, let alone of heading an Arab confederation of states. In addition to Medina's disaffection and Khurma's defection, the urban groups, particularly in Jeddah,[30] were alienated to the point that they were elated when the Hashemites lost their foothold in Syria in August 1920. The British agent reported:

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and telegraphs. Another office called Majlis El-Shyukh (legislative) composed, at present, of about ten members . . ." There was in addition a council, whose secretariat was composed of members of many ministries and which examined all government measures. Hussein noted that these administrative bodies functioned only in the urban sections of society, and then justified aspects of state economic planning, or rather the lack of it. He expressed the rather unrealistic hope that his new ministries would be functioning properly within seven weeks. (King Hussein to the British agent, Jeddah, 20 April 1919, FO 371/5066.)

26 Gellner, Ernest, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1983, p. 92. Hereinafter cited as Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*.

27 "The Sa'ud family skilfully used the idea of equality among believers in order to mobilise the Bedouin as an aggressive force." See Salamé, p. 214.

28 See "Report on the Hejaz by Emir Faisal", *c.* 19 June 1921, CO 727/2.

29 See Weber, pp. 346–52. Weber's work, first published in 1922, contains many instances of such definitive terminology.

30 This was not the case in Mecca, where there was support for Faisal, according to the British Indian agent, Captain Ahmed (*Report*, 1–10 August 1920, FO 371/5243).

> The flight of the Emir [i.e. of Faisal from Syria] and termination of Sharifian rule being hailed with great satisfaction, which the leading notables and merchants have difficulty in concealing. It is considered as the beginning of the end . . . This attitude was only to be expected owing to the distrust and hatred in which the present ruler is held, not only by all the commercial community, but by the majority of officials.[31]

Social discontent escalated as a result of his avaricious "borrowing": in July 1920 Hussein demanded a loan from Jeddah merchants, and again in September he allegedly "borrowed £10,000".[32] There were numerous complaints of forcible seizures of goods, and merchants were forced to sell stock cheaply to Hussein's officials, which was then resold at exorbitant prices, since the king had thereby created a monopoly system.[33] New economic controls greatly undermined local commerce – such as the prohibition of the transport of gold, the favoured medium of payment, from town to town, thus complicating mercantile procedures. Strict controls on exports, price-fixing and imposition of exorbitant customs dues, combined to drive all but the most determined out of business.[34] Hussein then imposed a boycott on French and British imports to protest against Great Power policy in Syria. Such chaos, and rumours of a planned Ikhwan advance, encouraged many to attempt to flee the Hijaz, but Hussein prohibited this.

Because of decreased national revenues and tribal opposition to taxation, Hijazi law and order deteriorated, and the administration became highly corrupt. In the summer of 1920, robbery and bribery were

31 See political report by acting British agent, Jeddah, 1–10 August 1920, FO 371/5243.

32 See *Jeddah Report*, 1–10 September 1920, FO 686/20.

33 It should be noted that, in addition to the British subsidy, Hussein, as sharif of Mecca, had a considerable income from customs: duty was paid not only on imports arriving by sea, but on all animals arriving at Mecca for slaughter (political report by acting British agent, Jeddah, 1–10 August 1920, FO 371/5243). There were food shortages, even of staples, such as barley. As the British agent pointed out: "One thing is certain, and the Kaimakam confirmed it . . . that the King commandeers most of the supplies of grain at prices fixed by himself, for Military requirements." (*Jeddah Report*, 1–10 September 1920, FO 686/20.)

34 In early 1924 Hussein redoubled his efforts, seizing goods from merchants and giving IOUs in favour of remission of customs duties, but then later charging anyway (*Jeddah Report*, 30 January–29 February 1924, FO 371/10006).

reportedly more frequent than under the Ottomans.[35] In Medina two ammunition dumps exploded, killing many and greatly damaging the town. Although some wished to blame Hussein for this, the favoured explanation was that the explosions were caused by the sale of munitions to the bedouin by Baghdadi officers and other malcontents.[36] Furthermore, tax increases in November 1922 caused the Medina merchants, mayor and governor to protest, while unsafe roads, exorbitant food prices and customs corruption underlined the regional decline into poverty. It was in the context of social decline in Hijaz, at a time when social support for Ibn Saud was increasingly cohesive and expanding, that the two leaders embarked on the decisive contest for the loyalty of the community, in Khurma, the strategic gateway between Najd and Hijaz.

The Khurma dispute, 1917–19

The dispute over the governance of Khurma, and the subsequent massacre nearby at Turaba[37] in 1919, was a crucial turning-point in the power struggle between Hussein and Ibn Saud for paramount authority in Arabia: "One can consider the Turaba incident as the end of modern history and beginning of contemporary history for the Arabian peninsula."[38] Khurma, the crucial strategic gateway between Hijaz and Najd, had 5,000 inhabitants, from the Subai tribe, also a section of Ashraf – both groups loyal to Hussein. Thus Khurma was very much under Hashemite control: the governor had been appointed by Hussein in 1914, and most sources (except Philby) agree that the Al Saud had held Khurma only briefly in the nineteenth century. The dispute centred around issues of territorial possession and religious expansion: it was under the influence

35 "The present position has been succinctly summarised by saying that things were far better when they were worse." (Agency representative, Jeddah, 1–10 September 1920, FO 686/26.)

36 Précis of intelligence report of 10 September 1920, FO 636/26.

37 Turaba was about 75 miles south-east of Taif and 140 miles south-east of Mecca, but even the Government of India said, "It is unquestionably in the Hijaz and not in Nejd." (Political department minute by Shuckburgh, 2 June 1919, L/P&S/10/390). Turaba had 3,000 inhabitants and a number of Ashraf owning considerable land (Vassiliev, p. 295). Sharifian forces numbering 250 were killed in June 1919 and Amir Abdallah himself slightly injured (Note by Capt Garland on the Khurma dispute, forwarded to Earl Curzon, 15 June 1919, L/P&S/10/390).

38 Vassiliev, p. 298.

of a Najdi pilgrimage delegation in 1917 that Khurma defected to Wahhabism and its Qadi openly joined the Ikhwan.

In a bid to exercise political control, Hussein dismissed the Khurma's chosen Wahhabite Qadi, but the amir of Khurma, Khalid ibn Lu'ay, refused to let the new Qadi take up his duties and openly raised the standard of revolt against Hussein.[39] The Khurma crisis proved to be Hussein's first major miscalculation since he "considered the rebellion an intolerable affront to his authority and prestige, both as Sharif of Mecca and as prospective leader of a larger Arab state or confederation".[40] In the Khurma dispute, Hussein was essentially a religious leader in conflict with another religious sect over territory which had symbolic importance for his own secular political authority and the security of the Hashemite rule. Hussein's mistake was to respond to it as a territorial crisis while most of the associated societies of Najd and Hijaz considered it a predominantly religious issue.

Hussein's response re-affirmed his authority, but it exerted no ideological persuasion. It did not accommodate the effective religious pretext of his rival, nor the dominant societal perception, particularly in Khurma, that the conflict was between rival forms of religious legitimacy. His tactic complicated the conflict and increased his rival's grounds for grievance and retaliation:

> Ibn Saud could not allow members of his religious sect to be punished by another leader without being accused by the Ikhwan of Khurma and of Nejd of failing in his duty as their imam to protect them.[41]

Hussein thus provided his rival with a pretext for the raid on Turaba because a refusal by Ibn Saud to help the Khurma Wahhabis could have affected his own religious legitimacy.

Hussein's attempt to formulate a military response was aggravated in this instance by the fact that Ibn Saud had evidently instigated an initial Wahhabi assault at Khurma. Yet Ibn Saud denied his involvement, on the grounds that it lacked his "approval or visible support".[42] Ibn Saud's

39 Col C. E. Wilson, 8 August 1919, L/P&S/10/390, Pts. 9 and 10.

40 Daniel Silverfarb, "The British government and the Khurma dispute, 1918–1919", *Arabian Studies*, 5 (1979), p. 38.

41 Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 90.

42 The Arab Bureau said that up to the third clash in 1918, in which the Hashemite forces were annihilated 16 miles east of Khurma, "Ibn Sa'ud, pronouncing the

feigned passivity over the Khurma dispute placed Hussein in an awkward position. In responding to a seemingly isolated dispute and treating it as Ibn Saud's first serious challenge against his sovereignty, Hussein would appear (unfairly) to many as the unreasonable aggressor. It must be considered that Hussein was trapped in the fatal interplay of the three dynamics of his authority: religious legitimacy, coercive strategy and territorial security. The particular time and circumstances of the Khurma dispute meant that any option open to Hussein would be unfavourable for his prestige. Abstention from military action would make him appear weak and allow the spread of a Wahhabi religious legitimacy which excluded his authority. But if he were to be aggressive – as in his several military attempts to retake Khurma in 1918-19 – he would undermine his religious legitimacy in Wahhabi eyes and invite territorial encroachment on the religious grounds that he had attacked the Wahhabi revival movement. In contrast, for Ibn Saud, the same variables of religious legitimacy, coercive force and territorial security gave him an ideal opportunity. He could plausibly present Khurma's request for help to international witnesses as a hard request to refuse on religious grounds. On the other hand, if he did not respond to the call of the inhabitants of Khurma, he would emphasise his seemingly flexible restraint in inviting British arbitration, thereby increasing Britain's approval and support for him. Whether he attacked or not, Ibn Saud stood to gain.

The British stance was that, although it could have helped to resolve the dispute peacefully in several ways, the simplest option was to let the two parties fight it out. In discussing the "vexed question of Khurma" in November 1919, Lord Curzon noted that at its last meeting in June the Cabinet had been hasty because of the impending Wahhabi attack on Mecca: "The Conference" [i.e. Cabinet] had more or less gone back on its original policy of supporting Hussein, justified because they "had . . . been stampeded by the military danger to the Holy Places." In spite of a growing conviction that Britain had been made to look foolish by Hussein, "the Conference should not lose sight of the

King an aggressor in every incident, declined to be responsible for his men at Khurma." But in spite of his denials he could not be absolved: "Khalid was acting as his agent." ("Note by Captain Garland on the Khurma Dispute", *c.* 11 June 1919, L/P&S/10/390, Pts. 9 and 10.)

fact that the policy of His Majesty's Government was essentially a Hussein policy".[43] But Hussein would have to prove himself with a show of strength over Ibn Saud in the field, "the situation is developing into a far too critical state for him to continue his defensive policy much longer; by it King Hussein has lost considerable prestige, Arabs regarding it as necessitated by fear and weakness . . ."[44] In other words, it was impossible for Hussein to pass off a non-aggressive policy as anything other than defeatist, especially given his particular society's keen ethos of demonstrating tribal military power. The Government of India also defended Ibn Saud's claim. In June 1919 it did not wish to reopen the debate about Khurma, but sharply criticised Cairo's condemnation of Ibn Saud, "Bin Sa'ud had at any rate an arguable case."[45] Nevertheless, other members of his society, including some notable Wahhabis who were not supporters of Hussein, defended his non-aggression in the Khurma affair as a viable and credible form of response, claiming that Hussein wished to prevent fighting amongst Arabs which would endanger the struggle for Arab unity.[46]

Hussein's unprofitable attacks on Khurma demonstrated that a modest defeat often entices a leader to invest even more military resources in the hope of converting shame into victory. The Khurma incident showed the difference between Hussein and Ibn Saud, the former being willing to initiate aggression without possessing a sufficiently strong personal force to carry it through.[47] In contrast, Ibn Saud never deluded himself

43 See "Minutes of Interdepartmental Conference on Middle Eastern Affairs", 24 November 1919, L/P&S/10/390, Pts. 9 and 10.

44 Col Wilson at Jeddah to Wingate, 4 December 1918, FO 371/4144.

45 See Minute, 2 June 1919, L/P&S/10/390.

46 Col Wilson at Jeddah to Wingate, 4 December 1918, FO 371/4144. Amongst these were Muhammad Nasif, who was in prison in Mecca; he also pointed out that as a religious head, Ibn Saud had the power to stop the Wahhabi side of the aggression if he wished.

47 Exact figures pertain only to losses; for instance, Garland of the Arab Bureau, in reporting the Turaba defeat, said "10,000 bedu originally reported to be with Abdulla seem to have melted away", and "the majority of the tribal elements which profess allegiance to King Hussein [are] absolutely unreliable". Moreover Hussein himself reported 250 sharifians killed, all artillery and two-thirds of the supplies lost ("Note by Captain Garland", *c.* 15 June 1919, L/P&S/10/390). Yet Ibn Saud, in a letter to Ibn Rashid of 30 May 1919, claimed that at Turaba the sharif had 4,000 Turkish soldiers, and "7,000 men of the Hedjaz, together with 20 guns, 40 machine guns", etc., "while our Ikhwan numbered only 2,000." (L/P&S/10/390.)

into thinking that he could win a major engagement when he did not have the resources. Hussein's defeats were humiliating because they occurred before the eyes of those British officials in Cairo who had committed themselves to supporting Hussein's claim to Khurma.[48] At a meeting of 15 August 1918 the British Cabinet decided that "the Sharif should be allowed to occupy Khurma pending a final settlement of the quarrel after the war".[49] Thus the recapture of Khurma became increasingly important to Hussein because the blow to his leadership created by open defiance from the Wahhabis increased the pressure upon him to win in order to regain his prestige. Hussein might better have employed some form of attrition strategy such as a siege or blockade to break the resistance of Khurma but his strategy served Ibn Saud by encouraging escalation of the tension. The Wahhabis in Khurma appealed to Ibn Saud, but the latter, exhibiting a tactical sense of timing, withheld his support.

The historic outcome of the Khurma dispute was that Ibn Saud's advance on Turaba entirely annihilated Hussein's armed force which was his sole independent means of defending his sovereignty. This was the point at which Hussein lost the Hijaz, for the incident destroyed the Hashemite military capability.[50] The fact that blame for the defeat at Turaba was subsequently openly disputed amongst the Hashemite leadership was itself a sign of poor military cohesion amongst the senior commanders of the army, not gauged to increase morale or confidence among the troops.

Hussein's handling of the Khurma dispute intensified the religious dimension of his conflict with Ibn Saud. This later hindered Britain from giving him coercive support when Hijaz was annexed, because of his territory's special religious significance. British Indian Muslim troops could not be sent to defend Hijaz because the viceroy of India reported that general Muslim opinion viewed war on sanctified territory as furthering the destruction of Islam.[51] Thus, although the Cabinet had discussed the

48 For an analysis of the dispute, see Daniel Silverfarb, "The British Government and the Khurma Dispute, 1918–1919", *Arabian Studies*, 5 (1979), pp. 37–52; hereinafter cited as Silverfarb, "Khurma".

49 *Ibid.*, p. 43.

50 Abdallah admitted that only three men remained alive from the regular army of 500 and only 150 from the 850 Hijazis that accompanied him, and the Ikhwan captured most of his weaponry (Vassiliev, p. 297).

51 Viceroy to secretary of state for India, 25 September 1924, No. 3890. This issue had constantly been raised by the Government of India, such as at the Cabinet

fact that Hussein considered this conflict political, Britain declared the conflict to be a religious dispute in which it could not intervene.

Turaba was a crucial turning-point in the final contest for paramount authority in Arabia. It was the first full-scale Ikhwan attack and victory over sharifian forces in Hijazi territory and became a political metaphor for Hussein's loss of authority over all Hijaz. Khurma had traditionally been Hijazi territory under the rule of a member of the Ashraf, but the religious affiliations of Khurma society had changed. In this particular incident, Hussein had a strong military force compared with that of Ibn Saud, and yet was defeated; thus "the Khurma incident revealed the supremacy of *aqidah* or religious belief"[52] over superior might. Moreover, the loss of Khurma immediately encouraged the Hijazi tribes to mobilise against Hussein. In February 1919 Colonel Wilson in Jeddah reported to the Arab Bureau, "Emir Khalid in Khurma with his revolt inflamed the spirit of other tribesmen . . . The revolt in Khurma is now known all over the Hejaz and the unsuccessful attempts of the king to quell it are regarded by the tribes as a sign of his prestige and power decaying."[53]

It is clear that the Khurma dispute must be viewed as the decisive coercive confrontation between the two candidates for Arabian power. Khurma was the gateway to the Hijaz – whoever ruled Khurma would eventually rule Mecca and therefore Hijaz. Ibn Saud's victory symbolised the success of one ideology over another where religion proved a socially stronger motivation than any other tribal or regional motivator. Hussein failed to retain authority because he failed to sustain a socially appealing ideology and army, whereas Ibn Saud nurtured both these important foundations of rule. This served him better than Hussein in exacting postwar advantages from their foreign ally, Britain.

British postwar relations with Hussein and Ibn Saud

Hussein's continuing perception of the British–Hashemite friendship as a self-evident "special relationship" conflicted with Britain's evaluation of his postwar utility. One major way in which Britain misled Hussein was through the shift of its political ideals which shaped its postwar

meeting of 13 June 1919; their concern was that a mutiny of all Muslims in the British [Indian] army would result from sending Indian troops to support a Muslim chief who "had rebelled against the Caliph" (L/P&S/10/390).

52 Vassiliev, p. 295.

53 Col Wilson, Jeddah, to Director, Arab Bureau, 11/2/1919, FO 686/10.

foreign policy. Formerly, Britain had supported pan-Arab nationalism to stimulate the Arab revolt; but the postwar ideal of self-determination was Britain's priority after the Paris peace conference, in conformity with its changing strategic requirements and to satisfy its leading allies. Britain now related Hussein's greatly diminished postwar popular backing to the principle of local self-determination and viewed it as militating against his bid for pan-Arab power. Britain thus acquired legitimacy when abstaining from intervention to support him during Ibn Saud's challenge for control of Hijaz. In the context of Britain's revised strategic requirements, Hussein's demeanour after the Arab revolt (including his wrangling over territory, abstention from any international postwar negotiations, tortuous hindrance of British treaty negotiations which might have secured him an undisputed, if limited hegemony) weakened his international political authority and in particular British support for him. British officials increasingly complained not only of the opportunities he missed but also of his personal eccentricities and difficult behaviour: "He compromises us hourly, by his behaviour and government, and complains that we (by letting him carry out in 1916 what he, before the war, broached in 1914) have compromised him in Moslem eyes. It is like being linked arm-in-arm to a lunatic."[54] However, some of the British agents on the spot were more sympathetic towards the difficulties of his position: "He is doubtful of his capacity unaided to realise his aims, and fearful of the censure which he feels will be meted out to him . . . by Moslems if he fails. He is oppressed with affairs of state . . . at an advanced age and under conditions of exceptional difficulty."[55]

Both the political climate created by the postwar international peace conference at Versailles, and the practical need to place diplomatic relations with the Hijaz on a formal footing, led to laborious negotiations for an Anglo-Hashemite treaty of friendship. Yet, when Britain resumed negotiations,[56] Hussein proceeded to resist the treaty all the way, and negotiations dragged on interminably:

54 Grafftey Smith at Jeddah to foreign office, 21 January 1922, FO 371/7711.

55 Sir Reginald Wingate to foreign secretary, 21 September 1918, FO 141/557.

56 Numerous drafts of a formal treaty were prepared in the early 1920s, and one was actually signed by Sharif Ali on behalf of Hussein, but Hussein rejected it, as he had the previous drafts, over very minor changes or disagreements with translation. In 1923, the British government was still willing to undertake the treaty as numerous memos and inter-office correspondence show (FO 371/8939).

> It must be eighteen months or two years since King Hussein did anything we may have wanted him to do without dissembling . . . he has, except in tiny matters of the most unimportant routine, made every possible difficulty, always. Continual obstruction and continual provocation.[57]

Britain's repeated attempts to secure a formal postwar treaty with Hussein proved a source of irritation; he completely refused to cooperate, hindering negotiations at every turn. Moreover, Britain considered that the timing of his claim to the caliphate might create the (erroneous) impression to foreign observers that Britain supported this claim, so to dispel this assumption Britain immediately distanced itself from Hussein:

> It therefore seemed most undesirable to conclude a treaty before the novelty of King Hussein's proclamation had worn off, lest we should be held to be tacitly acknowledging his new dignity. It was therefore decided to wait for further overtures regarding the treaty to come from King Hussein, and to make none ourselves in the meantime.[58]

Hussein's rejection of a treaty was fatal to his authority, however, for he lost the chance to secure himself a limited sovereignty in Hijaz. It is not a leader's weaknesses but his strengths which sustain foreign support. Hussein thus made a considerable mistake with regard to the leadership image he projected; he was seen as a failure, as a vacillator in declining years and health, and thus a poor candidate in international eyes for support: "His people called him a traitor and a tyrant, and the Moslem world looked at him askance. He was an old man and could bear the strain no longer."[59] Nevertheless, immediately after the revolt, the British government's policy was to support Hussein fully, and especially to recognise Khurma, Turaba and Bisha as his territories to encourage him, because foreign office officials were still concerned about the uncontrollable spread of the Ikhwan movement. Support for Ibn Saud was therefore seen partly as support for the Ikhwan.[60]

57 British agent at Jeddah to Forbes Adam, 21 January 1922, FO 371/7711.

58 See "Memorandum by Mr Mallet on the Anglo-Hashemite treaty negotiations", 1924, E 4678/29/91 in L/P&S/10/881.

59 See *Report* for 20–30 November 1920, FO 371/5243.

60 Col C. E. Wilson to Major Young, foreign office, 9 November 1919, L/P&S/10/390, Pts. 9 and 10.

Ibn Saud's postwar relations with Britain were a complete contrast with Hussein's. The latter's revised agenda for power in many ways conflicted with Britain's postwar objectives, but Ibn Saud found that if he compromised somewhat on his territorial aims he could usefully channel Britain's objectives to his own political advantage. Ibn Saud's essential concern was to sustain the advantages of British alliance while subverting the restrictions on his hegemony which were created by Britain's establishment of mandates on the northern borders of Najd. For Ibn Saud, the strategic significance of the mandates was that Britain and its Great Power allies' security interests, rather than his own political needs, would determine territorial demarcations. His strategic situation was further threatened since the Hashemites were set up as rulers over mandates which immediately adjoined his territory. However, the outstanding tactic of Ibn Saud was not to react defensively like Hussein to restrictions on his hegemony and abstain from Britain's postwar conferences. Rather he made it his priority to participate fully in talks where the fate of Middle Eastern territories was decided. He also cultivated an image of reasonableness: as early as 1920 even the agent at Jeddah noted to Abdallah "the marked moderation shown by Ibn Saud, his guarantees and his conciliatory spirit".[61] In this his aims were to maintain friendly relations with Britain to secure his immediate territorial borders, while attempting to subvert Britain's postwar territorial divisions in order to extend his control beyond Najd.

The mandates and their effect on postwar authority in Arabia

One fundamental factor obstructing the finalisation of a British–Hashemite treaty was Hussein's constant disapproval of the mandate system, despite the benefits which accrued to the Hashemites. (For example, Faisal was installed initially as King of Syria and Abdallah as amir of mandated Transjordan.) His opposition was self-destructive in several ways: it undercut the legitimacy of Britain's acquisition of desirable territory, which eroded British support for him, and it undercut his personal legitimacy, because the fact that his sons headed

61 See Jeddah Report of 19 August 1920, FO 371/5243.

these territories rendered his opposition politically incompatible with their new power.

To maintain his religious legitimacy as sharif of Mecca, he had little option but to oppose the Palestine mandate and the planned homeland for the Jews,[62] particularly in order to try to salvage the credibility lost after 1917 when he appeared passive on the issue of the Balfour Declaration. Towards the end of his rule Hussein increasingly opposed British plans for Palestine, stating that he wished Britain to support all legitimate Arab rights including political and economic rights, not merely the civil and religious rights as Britain proposed.[63] Although his lukewarm response to the Balfour Declaration proved very difficult to justify, Hussein expended much effort promoting debate of the Palestine issue.

> With a tenacity which ended by grating on Foreign Office nerves, he kept protesting . . . he was not moved by narrow or selfish motives, that his attitude was dictated solely by the conviction that there could be no peace for the British, Jews or Arabs in Palestine so long as the latter had come to suspect that the ultimate aim of Zionism was to establish a Jewish state in their midst and at the expense of their national aspirations.[64]

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62 In re-analysing in 1964 British promises to Hussein regarding Palestine, the foreign office concluded that at best the British government had been ambiguous about what Palestine was to become. The British high commission's vagueness was not intended as a deception, but it was nevertheless exploited later by other British officials. This re-analysis recognised that the British high commissioner in Cairo in his "Hejaz Rising Narrative" of November 1916 appeared "to assign Palestine to the Arabs under the Hussein–McMahon correspondence, while noting the reservation of French interests". This secret history by the Arab Bureau stated in particular: "What has been agreed to, therefore, on behalf of Great Britain is: (i) To recognise the independence of those portions of the Arab-speaking area in which we are free to act without detriment to the interests of France. Subject to these undefined reservations, the said area is understood to be bounded . . . west by the Red Sea and the Mediterranean up to about Latitude 33 and beyond by an indefinite line drawn west of Damascus, Hama, Homs and Aleppo." (FO 371/175635.)

63 Regarding the Palestine issue, Brigadier Clayton noted in 1924, following a talk with Hussein, that Hussein wanted any discussions on Palestine to be kept private to avoid criticism and opposition, and agreed with Hussein that he could not afford the resultant Muslim criticism and possible abuse should he accede to the Anglo-Hashemite Treaty as it stood. Clayton thus suggested dropping Article 2 altogether (G. F. Clayton memo, 23 January 1924 L/P&S/10/881).

64 See Antonius, p. 334.

In response, Britain made purely verbal concessions in drafts of the treaty it was then negotiating with Hussein. The high commissioner reported to the colonial secretary in January 1924, "a solution of the question of the Anglo-Hijaz treaty might be . . . the entire omission of Article 2 of the draft Treaty . . . no allusion being made in this document . . . to Palestine".[65] Indeed Britain did consider references to mandates submitted by Hussein. His version of Articles 2 and 4 (in translation) suggested that Britain should "recognise the independence of the Arabs in all Arab territories on the Peninsula, Iraq, Transjordan, Palestine and the other Arab territories, with the exception of Aden . . ." He suggested that any Palestinian state should not oppose sister Arab states.[66] Furthermore Hussein had announced these changes to the Treaty of Hijaz in *al-Qibla* of 29 October 1923, claiming he had made "the Balfour Promise as though it had never been and a sentence of death was passed on it".[67] Obviously Hussein was trying to regain public support and show himself to be a man of honour.

Another mandate with which Hussein began to concern himself after 1917 was that of Mesopotamia. He argued that Iraq should be acknowledged as his territory by right,[68] rather than as a separate state ruled by Faisal. In 1924 the foreign office acknowledged:

> we have pledged ourselves to King Hussein that Mesopotamia shall be 'Arab' and 'independent', subject to special measures of British control. There is no controversy about this control: it is accepted by King Hussein, by the people of Mesopotamia, and by all the British authorities that are concerned in the settlement of the Middle East.[69]

Given this policy, the foreign office was concerned when Captain Wilson proposed isolating and cutting off Mesopotamia from the Arab national movement, which it believed "would clearly be a breach of faith with King

65 Viscount Samuel to Rt. Hon. J. H. Thomas, secretary of state for the colonies, 25 January 1924, L/P&S/10/881.

66 See King Hussein's proposals: Hashemite Dival No. 1 to the British prime minister, Ramsey MacDonald, 2nd Moharram 1343, L/P&S/10/881.

67 See extract from *Al-Qibla*, 29 October 1923, FO 371/8956.

68 See series of correspondence between King Hussein and British agent at Jeddah from 3 September to 3 October 1918, FO 686/39.

69 See foreign office discussion regarding telegram from the chief political officer, Baghdad, n.d., but *c.* July 1917, FO 371/3386.

Hussein".[70] Yet it did not support Hussein's personal claim to power in northern Arabia, for instance over the Syrian mandate which he particularly claimed on the grounds that the Arab revolt had been inspired by the encouragement and backing of Syrian groups.[71] In the autumn of 1918 Faisal received the submission of the Syrians and their acceptance of Hussein as their sovereign, with the title "Emir-al-Muminin".[72] Hussein's reply shows that he presumed he would ultimately control that area: he consigned the Syrians to Faisal's care until such time as he could "himself attend to their affairs".[73] Thus, Wingate noted, Hussein had "in no degree abated his original pretensions concerning Syria . . ." Apparently, Wingate continued, "He still nourishes illusion that through the good offices of His Majesty's government he may be installed as, at any rate nominally, overlord of greater part of the country".[74] Britain's strategy for resolving the issue was to stress the new international emphasis on popular consent, arguing that there was no evidence that any Arab nationalist movement at grass-roots' level existed: "there is no political affinity with Syria or the Hijaz".[75] Extensive anthropological evidence collected by Gertrude Bell was produced in support of this, detailing the local tribes' limited political horizons.[76] In addition to such arguments, the

70 See foreign office memorandum on telegrams Nos. 10973 and 1109 from the chief political officer, Baghdad, FO 371/3386, n.d., but *c.* 1918.

71 The Arab and Syrian Committee in London wrote to him in February 1918, as "supporters of the Arab community and the Hashemite banner". (Arab and Syrian Committee in London to King of the Hejaz, n.d., *c.* February 1918, FO 371/3399.) It must be noted that there was also equal opposition to the Hashemites in Syria: in 1918 Syrian opinion was "averse to close connection with Arabia as represented by the King of Hejaz and his sons". (GHQ, Egyptian Expeditionary Force to foreign office, 21 September 1918.)

72 Wingate to FO, 13 October 1918, FO 371/3384.

73 Hussein's continuing possessive interest in Syria was evident in his campaign against the French; he petitioned the League of Nations in 1921, arguing, "the idea of the mandate in Syria will be synonymous to colonisation". (Hussein to League of Nations, 2 July 1921, CO 727/2.)

74 Sir H. Wingate, Cairo, 29 November 1917, FO 371/3057.

75 Memorandum on Telegrams Nos. 10972 and 1109 from political officer, Baghdad, FO 371/3386, n.d., but *c.* 1918.

76 Bell's well-known and numerous reports are in the *Arab Bulletin*, for instance much information on the fluctuating tribal situation through interviews with ibn Rumaih and 'Aqaili, on 23 February 1920 in Baghdad (L/P&S/10/390). However, there were other contemporary sources: the Ottomans reportedly gathered much anthropological evidence on Hijaz tribes; some of this material was captured

unpopularity of Faisal's rule gradually undermined Hussein's claims to Syria: "French domination is not liked by the Syrians but they would prefer to have that rather than revert to the late conditions."[77] Hussein's claims to support from groups in Syria were thus eroded. Furthermore, these claims had exerted considerable pressure on Anglo-French relations, which further alienated Britain from supporting Hussein's postwar authority.

Hussein's complete opposition to the mandate system thus affected his ability to conclude a treaty with Britain. Significantly, the appointments of Faisal and Abdallah as heads of mandates split the Hashemite dynasty and enforced a bloodless shift of internal allegiance: giving Hussein's sons the security of British backing was an ideal means of preventing them from working against Britain's new security agenda. His sons, placed in opposition to their father on security issues, would be sustained in power only as long as they supported Britain's position.

The first internal dynastic controversy which emerged after the mandates were established was the dispute over rival territorial claims which developed between Hussein and his son Abdallah over Ma'an and Aqaba[78] in the early 1920s as a result of Britain's desire to include these strategically important areas in the Transjordan mandate. The second, more crucial fracture in Hashemite solidarity came after Ibn Saud's encroachment on Hijaz, where British security imperatives conflicted with Hussein's sons' plans to offer their father refuge in the mandates. Hussein was denied refuge at Amman (Transjordan) because Viscount Samuel feared he would interfere in Abdallah's affairs and provoke a Wahhabi attack on Transjordan.[79] When Faisal learned from the high commissioner that his father would be refused refuge, he was "overcome by acute

from prisoners of war, and did not tally with known information, for instance there were said to be many more tribal divisions than previously thought. This material has apparently not been retained in British official archives (*Arab Bulletin*, No. 110, 30 April 1919).

77 See extracts from Jeddah's agent's report for the period ending 9 August 1920, FO 371/5243.

78 During Faisal's brief rule in Damascus, both he and his father laid claim to the areas of Ma'an and Aqaba, and after that it became an issue between Abdallah and Hussein. See B. Shwadran, *Jordan, a State of Tension* (New York, Council for Middle Eastern Affairs Press, 1959), pp. 154–8 and Troeller, p. 223.

79 High commissioner to Palestine to colonial secretary, 11 October 1924, No. 4115, L/P&S/10/3665/1924, Pt. 5.

hysteria. He sobbed, cried and threw himself about,"[80] yet ultimately he did not compromise his own position of power by abdicating or disobeying British wishes.

The mandate system contributed indirectly to Hussein's downfall during Ibn Saud's encroachment on Hijaz since his sons, as mandate rulers, were paralysed by the policy of non-intervention when Britain stated that it would "give no countenance to interference in the Hedjaz by Transjordan and Iraq".[81] (Admittedly Abdallah did supply his father with a small force of mercenaries,[82] and after Abdallah gained Aqaba it is thought that he allowed Ali to use it as a surreptitious supply route.)[83] Faisal and Abdallah's mandate positions also contributed to Hussein's destruction because of Britain's decision to treat with Ibn Saud during his encroachment on Hijaz, through the Anglo-Saudi negotiations led by Clayton in October 1924. These negotiations forced the mandate leaders to accept indirect treaty relations with Ibn Saud, against their father's interest, as well as to accept decisions made jointly by Britain and Ibn Saud on boundaries. For Hussein the mandates remained a further instance of foreign power betrayal, added to the Sykes–Picot Agreement and his misinterpretation of the fate of Syria and Palestine in early British correspondence with him.

By contrast, Ibn Saud needed to balance two policies with respect to Britain's attempts to affirm postwar boundaries and mandates. That is, his conciliatory policy of strengthening his formal British alliance contrasted with his antagonistic policy of expansionist raiding in this postwar period, which challenged the security of British mandates or protectorates. His diplomatic choices were further complicated by the fact that the Hashemites ruling over certain mandates could refuse him crucial commercial access to the northern Arab states, while he could also be denied access to the Red Sea by Hussein in Hijaz.

Nevertheless Ibn Saud was willing to touch the British strategic nerve and made a relatively clever, concerted use of the antithetical

80 High commissioner, Iraq, to colonial secretary, 13 October 1924, No. 4156, L/P&S/10/3665/1924, Pt. 1.

81 Colonial secretary to high commissioners for Iraq and Palestine, 30 September 1924, L/P&S/10/3665.

82 Bullard to Chamberlain, 30 June 1925, L/P&S/10/3665.

83 Toynbee, *Survey*, p. 300.

political techniques of conciliation and aggression. The most graphic illustration of this contrast are the Ikhwan raids on Transjordan, which contributed to the breakdown of the Kuwait Conference (see below),[84] where Ibn Saud was exhibiting his diplomatic flexibility and willingness to negotiate. His desire to compromise had been demonstrated in October 1923 when he, unlike Hussein, had agreed that the conference should be used to resolve all Hashemite–Saudi difficulties. However, while the British awaited the arrival of Ibn Saud's deputations, his coercive arm, led by al-Dawish, penetrated Hijaz to within eighty miles of Medina, a test of Britain's reaction to an intrusion into the heart of Hussein's hegemony. Al-Dawish's raid elicited only a strong British remonstrance,[85] possibly because of Britain's concern not to undermine negotiations before they had even started. Previously, in the Khurma incident, Ibn Saud's forces had tested Britain's reaction to his advance to Hijaz. Now, through the Ikhwan raids into Transjordan, he attempted an act of aggression against British territory itself. Although Britain considered cutting off Ibn Saud's supplies from Iraq and India,[86] ultimately Ibn Saud's forces had struck against British interests without provoking a substantial curb on his power.

The second of Ibn Saud's coercive tests came later in the negotiations. His solution to the threat that the Hashemite mandate rulers could refuse him crucial commercial access to the northern Arab states was to propose a Najd corridor running north between the British mandates. This neutral zone or corridor between Najd and Syria would thus separate Iraq and Transjordan. However, Ibn Saud's proposal was refused by Britain and Transjordan as contrary to their interests,[87] whereupon an extremely bloody Ikhwan raid on Iraq took place,[88] and served as the perfect means of concentrating attention on the Najdi demands. The raid had been

84 The Kuwait Conference was first proposed in November 1923, and met from 23 December 1923 to April 1924 in seventeen sessions.

85 Ibn Saud was asked to "deal with Faisal al-Dawish *as he deserves*". (FO to IO, 5 November 1923, No. 4256; high commissioner of Iraq to colonial secretary, 3 November 1923, No. 4232; L/P&S/10/405 1922, Pt. 1.)

86 High commissioner of Iraq to colonial secretary, 7 November 1923, No. 4297 and FO to Bullard (British consul, Jeddah), 6 November 1923, No. 425, L/P&S/10/3665.

87 See Kuwait Conference: Najd Proposals, 1923, R/15/1/594.

88 Dobbs reported that about 70 men, 20 women and 40 children had been killed in the Ikhwan raid upon the Diwaniya and Dhasrif shepherd sections (high

stimulated by forays into Najd by hostile Mutairi sections, and Ibn Saud's counter-attack was an exemplary demonstration that he would not tolerate the use of British mandate territory as a refuge for social groups which challenged his authority. Ibn Saud had given Britain a clear forewarning of the strike: "either tell me definitely that a stop will be put to these acts of aggression . . . or I must ask to be excused for any turn the affair may take".[89] This Ikhwan raid meant that for the first time Britain and Najd directly took opposing sides in a military conflict and, whatever his justification, Ibn Saud proved the loser. The high commissioner to Iraq rejected Ibn Saud's accusation that Mutair raids had been encouraged by Faisal,[90] therefore his counter-raid succeeded only in closing the Kuwait Conference altogether and temporarily suspending Saudi–British relations.[91]

The lesson learned by Ibn Saud was that Britain would tolerate a raid near one of the Holy Cities on the western border of Hijaz, but would never accept threats to its broader Middle Eastern interests. Further, his hope of obtaining a Najd corridor was now absolutely eliminated, since the colonial secretary had stated that Britain would never permit the separation of Iraq and Transjordan. But Ibn Saud understood that the Hashemites would attempt to use this bloc as a strategic centre to erode his power. The threat of the closure of the northern trade routes thus became an additional reason for Ibn Saud to annex Hijaz, in order to gain commercial access to the Red Sea. Therefore Ibn Saud, when explicitly planning strategies to incorporate the Hijaz within his hegemony, was also motivated by defensive strategic concerns, with the probable development of a Hashemite anti-Saudi bloc in Hijaz, Iraq and Transjordan.

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commissioner of Iraq to colonial secretary, 20 March 1924 (T), No. 1440, L/P&S/10/405). A letter from Lt Col Knox, president of the Kuwait Conference, to the colonial secretary, 30 March 1924, related that the recent raid against Iraq was of "almost unprecedented magnitude . . . by a force of 2,000 Ikhwan". (R/15/1/595.)

89 Knox to colonial secretary, 29 February 1924, No. 10670, CO 727/9.

90 High commissioner, Iraq, to colonial secretary, 13 March 1924, No. 1277, L/P&S/10/450, Pts. 2, 3 and 4.

91 Knox, believing that Britain was only compromising its dignity by continuing futile negotiations, recommended that the conference be dissolved (Knox to colonial secretary, 3 April 1924, No. 1687, CO 727/9).

However, the crucial difference between Ibn Saud and Hussein was that, for the time being, Ibn Saud accepted the Western principle of demarcation of the mandates and Arabia, and this helped to affirm his power. Ibn Saud accepted a new concept of territoriality to replace the local concept of shifting zones of tribal loyalty.[92] Britain was obviously seeking tranquillity for the mandates adjacent to Ibn Saud's territory, and he proved amenable, being rewarded for his generally flexible cooperation by Britain's recognition in May 1921 of his title of "Sultan of Najd". But when the Muhammara Treaty of 1922 formally defined the borders of Najd with Iraq and Kuwait,[93] Ibn Saud initially withheld his ratification because he was unhappy with the assignation of certain Najdi territories to Iraq. However, he realised that his diplomatic leverage was circumscribed by Britain's pressing security needs. At the 'Uqair conference the British high commissioner for Iraq, Sir Percy Cox, called Ibn Saud's "tribal boundary idea" childish, and carefully drew a distinct boundary line.[94]

Nevertheless, by accepting British encroachment on Najd territories, Ibn Saud gained a good deal of territory from Kuwait. According to the 'Uqair Protocols of December 1922 Cox gave in his own definition, "two-thirds of Kuwait's territory" to placate Ibn Saud.[95] Thus the Kuwait–Najd and Iraq–Najd frontier questions were formally resolved: "We take from Ibn Sa'oud to satisfy Iraq, and we take from Trans-Jordania to placate Ibn Sa'oud."[96] For Britain the signing of the Muhammara Treaty meant that the imminent danger of a large-scale Ikhwan conflagration on the Iraqi–Najdi frontier had abated.[97] The territorial concessions to Ibn Saud were a tribute to his expanding coercive strength, and to his

92 Kostiner, "Tribe and state formation", p. 234.

93 The Treaty of Muhammara, signed in 1922 between Najd and Iraq, was not ratified by Ibn Saud. It defined the preliminary boundaries between Najd and Kuwait and Najd and Iraq. A copy of the treaty is in L/P&S/10/937: "Treaty and Undertakings in Force between the Government of Iraq and HH the Sultan of Najd, signed at Mohammera, 5 May 1922", R/15/5/389.

94 H. R. P. Dickson, *Kuwait and her Neighbours* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1956), p. 273; hereinafter cited as Dickson, *Kuwait*.

95 Dickson, *Kuwait*, p. 275. Dickson considered this a cavalier assignment for the purposes of appeasement – the giving of a small and weak state's territory to its stronger and more troublesome neighbour.

96 Dickson, *Kuwait*, pp. 270–2 and al-Rihani, *Najd*, pp. 307–15.

97 Article 4 stated that if a breach of relations should occur between Najd, Iraq and Britain, the treaty should become null and void. Pending the decision of the projected meeting in Baghdad to work out the details of the boundary, the Ikhwan were pledged not to attack Iraqi tribes.

implicit potential to threaten British security interests. Furthermore, the two new treaty agreements with Britain which Ibn Saud undertook, and that with Kuwait, signed on 15 May 1923, were effective, unlike Britain's inconclusive attempt to negotiate with Hussein from 1921. That Ibn Saud chose to compromise on his borders during this period worked to his advantage later in encouraging British acceptance of his authority over Hijaz, for Britain recognised him as a reasonable negotiator where its own security interests were at stake.

The Kuwait Conference

The Kuwait Conference of 1923-4 is generally regarded as one of Britain's last attempts to sustain a limited authority for Hussein in Arabia. The conference was convened to settle the outstanding territorial disputes between Najd, Hijaz, Transjordan and Iraq. The British tried extremely hard to induce Hussein to send a delegate, impressing on him that the possibility of settling differences with Najd could eliminate risks of further Ikhwan attacks on the Hijaz (this point was made shortly after Faisal al-Dawish's raid close to Medina).[98] The British view was that a settlement of the Najd–Hijaz issue was more likely to be in favour of the Hijaz when discussed at a conference where there could be much more latitude for give and take. Whereas if the Transjordan–Najd questions were definitely settled at Kuwait Hussein's frontier would have to be decided on its own merits and he might suffer as a result.[99]

Nevertheless Hussein abstained from participation; his response underlined the difference between the two leaders, for when Hussein felt dominated and alienated, he reacted inflexibly. In contrast, Ibn Saud understood that it was to his advantage to appear willing to negotiate, and to create an image of being a cooperative non-aggressor. The British chairman of the conference tried to persuade Hussein of the advantages of negotiating from a position of weakness by citing countless instances of countries forced to negotiate with an enemy in possession of a conquered territory.[100] The British might also have cited Ibn Saud's ability to make concessions in the recently negotiated Muhammara Treaty. By sacrificing significant territory to Iraq, Ibn Saud received sizeable territorial

98 In autumn 1923 Faisal al-Dawish raided al-Ulla, close to Medina (FO to IO, 5 November 1923, R/15/1/594).

99 See FO to Bullard (British consul, Jeddah), 6 November 1923, R/15/1/594.

100 Knox to colonial secretary, 24 December 1923, No. 164, L/P&S/10/450.

gains in Kuwait under the terms of the 'Uqair Protocols of December 1922. The British High Commissioner of Iraq, Sir Percy Cox, commenting on the matter, stated that "two-thirds of Kuwait's territory" was given to Najd.[101] However, Hussein missed his chance to force Ibn Saud, through the good offices of Britain, to acknowledge formally the sovereignty of Hijaz. Ibn Saud's encroachment on the Hijaz might have been avoided if Hussein had taken the late opportunity of the Kuwait Conference to formalise his diplomatic relations with Britain or Ibn Saud. However, Hussein eliminated this option by refusing to send a Hijaz delegate to the conference.

One aspect of these negotiations which clearly threatened Ibn Saud's territorial security was that Hussein attempted to use his sons' special positions as rulers of British mandates to forward his own aims. The mandate leaders exploited vulnerable areas of the British security agenda to press for greater control over Ibn Saud: Abdallah stressed that if the Hijaz came under Wahhabi control, the Ikhwan influence would soon be felt in Transjordan.[102] Faisal expressed fear that if Ibn Saud overran the Hijaz, the surge in his prestige would be such that the tribes of the southern Euphrates would join the Wahhabi cause.[103] These Hashemite warnings were transparent attempts to exploit British fears regarding the security of the empire. However, this concerted last-ditch attempt by the Hashemites to elicit recognition of their father's supremacy worked against them, because it led Ibn Saud to refuse to sign the agreement as he saw through their strategy. The end result was a diplomatic deadlock where agreements were not ratified at the last moment, and the conference dissolved, adding to British irritation with Hussein. Lt. Col. S. G. Knox, despite his own dislike of Ibn Saud, concluded:

> "Throughout these negotiations (with one exception) I cannot refrain from contrasting the scrupulously correct attitude, on the surface, of the Sultan of Nadj and his delegates, their apparently earnest desire for peace and the sacrifices that they are prepared to submit to secure it, with the childish and uncompromising attitude of the Hashemites".[104]

101 12 June 1922, (T), No. 2480; L/P & S/10, 7251/1920.

102 See high commissioner, Palestine, to colonial secretary, 11 September 1924, L/P&S/10/3665/1924, Pt. 1.

103 High commissioner, Iraq, to colonial secretary, 11 October 1924, L/P&S/10/3665/1924, Pt. 1.

104 Knox to colonial secretary, 30 March 1924, L/P & S/10/1034.

The most important benefit accruing to Ibn Saud was that the collapse of the conference postponed settlement of the Hijaz boundary question, for once such a boundary came to be internationally recognised it would be harder for him to enter the Hijaz, and a formal affirmation of Hijaz sovereignty would have increased the likelihood of foreign intervention to protect the new post-Versailles support for "small nations". It was to his advantage that Hussein's absence, understood as a refusal to negotiate, was internationally perceived as a major cause of the breakdown of talks, while Ibn Saud's own apparent willingness to negotiate was evident. A feature of the discussions had been the vexed question of how Ibn Saud might in the future be ordered to withdraw from Hussein's frontier when this frontier had not yet been defined by international treaty.[105] Ibn Saud could thus hope that the time had come to "turn Hussein's many mistakes to the advantage of Nejd".[106]

However, the abrupt dissolution of the Kuwait Conference affected Ibn Saud's authority through Britain's punitive suspension of his subsidies. While it had already been decided to end subsidies to Arabian leaders absolutely by 1924,[107] in the short term the subsidy policy had continued after the war. Ibn Saud was thus still in receipt of assistance while Hussein's subsidy had been suspended in 1920 because of his resistance to British postwar mandate interests. Even so, Ibn Saud's sabre-rattling on the northern borders irritated the British after the Kuwait Conference, and Ibn Saud's subvention was also withdrawn. Ibn Saud's willingness to provoke this loss, and Britain's emphatic retaliation, marked a very significant turning-point in their relations.

Ibn Saud's loss of financial aid, and the timing of his subsequent entry into the Hijaz raises the question of how much the end of British subsidies ultimately encouraged him in his final bid for authority. Ibn Saud had accepted aid from Britain for as long as he could, realising the importance of money to the "economy of loyalty" exercised by his associated groups,[108] and thus in the postwar period he played the "subsidies game" more effectively than Hussein. Britain, while threatening

105 Political resident to colonial secretary, 1 December 1923, L/P&S/10/450/1922, Pt. 1.

106 Wahbah, *Arabian Days*, pp. 146–7.

107 FO 371/8937.

108 Kostiner, "Tribe and state formation", p. 232.

to stop payment,[109] had never punitively suspended financial support to Ibn Saud, for it understood that the security of the Hijaz was partly dependent on this subsidy and financial rewards. For instance, during the Khurma conflict, Ibn Saud had expressed the view that Britain ought to have allowed him the spoils of war:

> Not only did you English fail to afford me help when attacked by an external enemy, but you actually prevented me from securing the fruits of my victory over the enemy after God had delivered them into my hands.[110]

Britain's prior concern to appease Ibn Saud is evident from the decision in 1921 to issue a special cash payment of £20,000, "in case at the present juncture you might be troubled with any temporary inconvenience".[111] Such payments show that Britain had not withheld subsidy from Ibn Saud earlier because of the security implications for the Hijaz. Shuckburgh at the India Office recognised as early as 1919, following a discussion with Philby, that ending the subsidy would create difficulties for Britain in protecting the Hijaz: "Bin Saud will be driven to conclude that he must now rely upon his own resources for the protection of his interests, and will take measures accordingly . . . there is a probability that they will take the form of a combined Wahhabi attack upon the Hijaz – the only thing that HM's Govt. are most anxious to avoid."[112]

Given Ibn Saud's action against Hussein after his subsidy ended, it seems clear that financial aid had discouraged him from entering the Hijaz earlier. Also, Britain's decision to end subsidies after the Kuwait Conference underlines its disaffected attitude to Hussein's intransigence during the conference negotiations, and its decision to leave Hussein to

109 These decisions were not reached lightly: many pages of minutes, telegrams and letters were dispatched between London and Baghdad; opinions of nearly every official involved were debated before a decision was made. Shuckburgh for example contributed over four closely written pages on the subject on 3 April 1919, analysing Philby and Wilson's views of the effect of stopping the grant (L/P&S/10/390).

110 Major H. R. P. Dickson, political agent, to civil commissioner, Baghdad, Hofuf, 10 February 1920, L/P&S/10/397. Dickson is here quoting Ibn Saud directly.

111 High commissioner, Baghdad, to Ibn Saud, 4 May 1921, R/15/2/74.

112 See Shuckburgh minute, "Arabia: the Nejd–Hijaz feud: proposal of Civil Commissioner, Baghdad to stop Bin Saud's subsidy etc.," 7 March 1919, L/P&S/10/390, Pts. 9 and 10.

contend with Ibn Saud's challenge by himself. One might argue that Britain, in ending the subsidies which had originally been motivated by wartime priorities,[113] was implicitly signalling the end of diplomatic efforts to control Ibn Saud – a form of acknowledgement of his right to make a bid for supreme authority in Arabia. He was then ready to exert his independence, and Britain to recognise it. Here, Ibn Saud's sense of political timing and his coordination of the elements of his power were highly calculated and effective. As one source of power (the British subsidy) ended, he had another, domestically-derived coercive force, the Ikhwan, ready to take its place.

The issue of postwar treaties

An important postwar objective for Britain was to effect a diplomatic reconciliation and a formal treaty between Ibn Saud and Hussein. It was widely held, at least in Jeddah, that Hussein's obstinacy alone stood in

113 The policy was thoroughly reviewed by the Cabinet in 1920 (L/P&S/880). A secret committee which included Sir Percy Cox and Col T. E. Lawrence was assigned to report on the payments and the services rendered, and it should be noted herein that Great Britain also felt obliged to pay the rulers of Sher and Mokalla, and Aden Protectorate chiefs besides Ibn Saud: Fahd Bey was also in receipt of a voluntary subsidy. The committee agreed £1,000,000 for Ibn Saud and the same for Hussein (CO 727/3). These subsidies were greatly reduced. Eventually the treasury sanctioned £15,000 sterling for each per month, but the goal was that Hussein ratify the Treaty of Versailles and sign the Treaty of Sèvres, which would have meant assent to the mandatory principle (Lord Curzon to Churchill, 14 April 1921, CO 727/3). Lord Allenby suggested the subsidies would be beneficial to Britain as well, regardless of sentimental reasons for continuing them. Shuckburgh at the India Office urged their maintenance in 1921 to avoid Mecca being overrun, since Britain would be "embarrassed" by this. Unarguably, the terms imposed on Hussein were very strict: detailed meetings held in 1921 with all concerned agreed that he must not only sign the above treaties but must also recognise British treaties with al-Idrisi and Ibn Saud, and "refrain from all aggression against them". He was also to improve the conditions of the pilgrimage, undertake a host of minor tasks, and, significantly, "prevent the Holy Places from becoming a focus for anti-British or pan-Islamic intrigue. Moreover, financial arrangements were not to be enshrined in the Anglo-Hashemite treaty. From the above, clearly, Hussein must pay a considerable price for his leadership." (CO minute, 19 October 1921, CO 727/2.) Finally in 1923 it was decided that both leaders were to be given a one-off payment of £50,000 – although Hussein's was still dependent on his signing of the treaty (foreign secretary to Iraq high commissioner, 7 April 1923, L/P&S/10/881).

the way of his forming an alliance with Ibn Saud.[114] Despite Ibn Saud's diplomatic *politesse* Hussein consistently rebuffed all letters, and made hostile and insulting remarks about Ibn Saud. In this he was encouraged by Abdallah who cheerfully referred to Ibn Saud as "a mere Bedu" (indicative of Abdallah's underlying cosmopolitan Ottoman outlook) and to the Ikhwan as "sons of dogs".[115] The effectiveness of a leader's strategy is determined by a true understanding of his political strengths. Hussein, in refusing reconciliation with Ibn Saud, failed to acknowledge the weakness of his social and coercive support, which could not withstand Saudi military superiority.

The only reason for Ibn Saud to entertain the possibility of reconciliation with Hussein would be to defer to the British, who had expended endless efforts trying to organise a meeting in 1920.[116] Ibn Saud had the wit not to be perceived as wasting British diplomatic efforts, whereas Hussein did not: "Hussein's case is prejudiced by his own personal imbecility . . . few would not be relieved to see the last of him . . ."[117] Hussein's lack of cooperation made Ibn Saud appear increasingly statesmanlike by comparison. This was crucial at this historical moment because, for disenchanted Britain, "it was not a question of forsaking Hussein, really, but rather a choice of successor".[118]

Thus, while Ibn Saud was committed to a formal treaty with Britain from 1915, Hussein possessed none. Ibn Saud's treaty was particularly important since, strictly speaking, its terms could be interpreted as allowing him eventually to occupy the Hijaz, because in this period Hussein had restricted access for Najdis to the pilgrimage. Specifically, Article 5 bound Ibn Saud "to keep open within his territories the roads leading to the Holy Places, and to protect Pilgrims on their passage to and from the Holy Places".[119] Hussein had not long before denied Najdis access to the hajj. The maintenance of a successful pilgrimage was directly linked to the religious legitimacy of both Ibn Saud and Hussein's leaderships; indeed securing the hajj was an essential foundation of their domestic

114 See Agent's report of 14 August 1920, FO 371/5243.

115 Major W. Batten, acting British agent, reporting talks with Abdallah in August 1920 in *Jeddah Report* to 19 August 1920, FO 371/5243.

116 See Minute of 29 April 1920, L/P&S/10/391.

117 See telegram to Lord Allenby, 29 May 1920, L/P&S/10/391.

118 Busch, *Britain, India and the Arabs*, p. 425.

119 See "Copy of Treaty between Great Britain and 'Abd al-Aziz bin al-Rahman b. Faisal al Sa'ud", 26 December 1915, L/P&S/10/387.

power. Thus, when Ibn Saud entered the Hijaz, he justified his actions "on the ground that King Husayn had neglected the rights of the Holy Places and had debarred the people of Najd from making the Pilgrimage . . ."[120]

Finally, Ibn Saud's new strength and independence were reasons why he did not invite Britain to mediate between himself and Hussein. Formerly, as during the Khurma dispute, such mediation was necessary, since his northern borders with the British mandates had not then been finally established. However, after the Treaty of Muhammara (May 1922), the 'Uqair Protocol (December 1922) and the Bahra and Hadda conferences (1925), the northern frontiers of Najd were formally affirmed. The sovereignty of Ibn Saud's territory was then secure and he was free to focus on westward expansion.

Ibn Saud and Hussein's postwar religious authority

It has been claimed that the model of state which Hussein invoked during the Arab revolt,

> emulated the classical pattern of Islamic empire building. The change in supreme authority, religious law, and economy epitomized the new polity and left society unchanged. Indeed, it probably served as a model for Ibn Saud, who encountered it after his occupation of the Hijaz.[121]

However, the postwar period underlined that Hussein had not succeeded in laying the foundations for an expanding religious empire. As previously discussed, during the Arab revolt he had transformed the political basis of his leadership, originally derived from his religious authority, to a basis of mainly nationalist rule, and it would be difficult for him to regain the former religious character. Thus he failed to appeal to his society on religious grounds, although Islam was the force most likely in peacetime to unite his groups, tribal and urban, against militant Wahhabism. His preoccupation with becoming a pan-Arab leader had diminished his concern for his religious authority. For instance, he did not invest effort in effective management of the hajj, since there were rumours of robberies of the Medina caravans and of "appalling" inconveniences suffered by

120 Troeller, pp. 221–2.
121 Kostiner, "The Hashemite 'Tribal Confederacy'", pp. 126–43.

pilgrims coming via Yenbo. Public confidence in his religious authority was clearly lacking: "The pilgrims have a hundred and one grievances for which the Hachemite [*sic*] officials are primarily responsible."[122] Rumour-mongering stimulated the popular movement against Hussein; there was even comment that he considered that pilgrims ought to suffer.[123]

His critical political problem was that his religious authority as sharif was then being overwhelmed by Ibn Saud's religious challenge through the Wahhabi revival. This swamping of Hussein's religious legitimacy as sharif of Mecca under the tide of Wahhabism determined his fall to a great extent. Hussein's subsequent assumption of the caliphate was perhaps a compensation for this decline in his authority, since by assuming a religious title he could resurrect the scope of his wartime importance.

Hussein's formal claim to the caliphate on 5 March 1924, only a few days after the Turkish Grand National Assembly abolished the office, was announced abruptly, like his wartime claim to be "King of All Arabs".[124] Hussein made himself vulnerable through his miscalculated invocation of precedent in the period of high Islamic scholarship when Hashemite caliphs had reigned.[125] Many Muslims disagreed with his definition of the caliphate, particularly the extremely fanatical Wahhabi groups, and did not want Islamic power to be completely monopolised by an Arab whose authority already controlled the Holy Cities.[126] The issue of the caliphate thus began to acquire political overtones connected

122 See Jeddah report by Captain Mian Nasir-ud-Din-Ahmad for period to 29 July 1920, FO 371/5243.

123 *Ibid.* This is difficult to balance against his promise at the same time to the British to either "withdraw" or "commit suicide" because, he said, "I will never oppose what is necessary for peace and progress of country especially when there are thousands of pilgrims here." (Hussein telegram conveyed via Lord Allenby at Alexandria to foreign office, 5 July 1920, L/P&S/10/391, Pts. 11 and 12.)

124 Bullard to Ramsay MacDonald (British prime minister and foreign secretary) 29 March 1924, No. 2062, L/P&S/10/1707.

125 The form of caliphate which Hussein invoked derived from the period of high Islamic scholarship after the Abbasids seized power in AD 750. The period of their rule was considered "the Golden Age of Islam", where the institution of the ulema evolved and the need for legal scholar jurists increased. By AD 929 there existed three caliphs: the Umayyad caliph in Muslim Spain, the Fatimid caliph in Egypt, and the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad (Philip Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 10th edn (London, Macmillan, 1937), pp. 317–31).

126 Various colonial officers in 1923 reported on local opinions, for instance in Malaya, and the consensus was for the Turkish sultan to remain caliph (Kuala Lumpur to colonial secretary, 18 October 1923, L/P&S/10/895).

with the over-concentration of power. Active Indian Muslims wanted the reunification of the caliphate and the sultanate. The issue provided an Indian group, the Caliphate Committee, "using religious issues as a stick . . . to beat their British rulers",[127] with a reason to canvass for Hussein's removal from power and for support of Ibn Saud, "to act as the sword of Islam in place of the sacrilegious President of the Turkish Republic".[128]

The Caliphate Committee's stance proved politically convenient for Ibn Saud, since Britain's priority lay in appeasing popular opinion in India more than in supporting Hashemite bids for power. Furthermore, Hussein's claim received little support from the Muslim world, whereas Ibn Saud's criticism was supported by groups in Egypt and India, particularly because of Hussein's previous maltreatment of their pilgrims.[129] Because of his previous shift to a political leadership with overtones of secular nationalism, and his wartime opposition to the Ottomans, and thus arguably to their caliph, he now risked losing religious legitimacy by assuming the caliphate. Popular opinion in Jeddah, for example, did not support Hussein's claim:

> The Jeddah people are greatly depressed. The assumption of the Caliphate by King Husain they regard as a farce, but the abolition of the Turkish Caliphate has given a check to the hope that had sustained them: that sooner or later the Turks would recover the Hijaz.[130]

Hussein also misused his religious authority with disastrous effect, in preventing Najdis from attending the hajj from 1919 to 1923. The question of a Najdi pilgrimage had been troublesome since 1917 when Ibn Saud first imposed a ban on Najdi attendance.[131] When in 1920 Ibn

127 Troeller, p. 217. Extensive monitoring of views of the Indian Muslims is found in Government of India correspondence, from provincial administration to the foreign and political department during 1923, in file L/P&S/10/895, and shows how deeply concerned Britain was at sustained hostility to Hussein's claim.

128 Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia*, pp. 306–13. Philby was referring here to the Turkish caliph. See also Glubb, *War in the Desert*, Chapter 19.

129 For example, there was trouble over the Egyptian medical mission that escorted the annual Egyptian pilgrim caravan (Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, p. 66).

130 L/P&S/10/1707.

131 In 1917 a Najdi pilgrimage was curtailed when members of the Al Saud fell ill;

Saud requested that the pilgrimage be reopened to Najdis, he met with opposition.[132] A subsequent Ikhwan raid near Mecca in 1920[133] further encouraged Hussein to oppose the reopening of the pilgrimage to Najdis; the increased insecurity caused by border skirmishes led to Hussein's prohibition in 1922 of a Najdi entry to Hijaz overland.[134] For the sake of British–Saudi relations the foreign office could not accept this embargo, having urged Ibn Saud to hold his pilgrims off for several years running. The foreign office thought it would be best if Najdi pilgrims left their arms at Taif, but this recommendation was opposed by the colonial office on the grounds that the Najdis would be exposed to danger.[135]

British officials considered that the Najdi pilgrimage could not be prevented again, that Ibn Saud's patience must not be tested since he had made concessions year after year. Hussein was therefore warned that if any Hijazi aggression caused trouble, relations with Britain would be seriously affected. Hussein thus found himself in a no-win situation: if he made his own security a priority, he might lose British support, yet permitting a Najdi pilgrimage would also undermine his security. Therefore, 1,800 Najdi pilgrims were permitted to enter Mecca in July 1922, including 70 royal guests who were cordially received.[136] However, in the following year, Hussein again became suspicious and refused to allow Najdi pilgrims to enter Mecca.[137] His extension of the ban in 1923 surpassed logical security fears and became in itself provocative.

Since it was the central responsibility of the sharif of Mecca to ensure access to pilgrimage, Hussein's embargo undermined his legitimacy

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this provoked Hijazi ridicule and as a result Ibn Saud prohibited attendance for two years (*Philby Mission Report*, L/P&S/10/390).

132 Civil commissioner, Baghdad, to India Office, L/P&S/10/936.

133 An Ikhwan raid on 500 Yemeni pilgrims only two days' march from Mecca took place in July 1920 and this undermined negotiations to sanction Najdi attendance (L/P&S/10/391, Pts. 2 and 3; L/P&S/10/936).

134 Fu'ad al-Khatib, Hejaz foreign secretary, to British agent, Jeddah, 19 May 1922, L/P&S/10/936.

135 FO to CO, 25 May 1922, L/P&S/10/936 and CO to FO, 30 May 1922.

136 L/P&S/10/936.

137 Viceroy, foreign and political, to secretary of state for India, 20 December 1923, FO 371/8940. See also Wahbah, *Arabian Days*, pp. 146–7; al-Mukhtar, pp. 289–91; Muhammad Abdallah Madi, *al-Nahdat al-haditha fi jazirat al-'Arab* (Cairo, 'Isa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1952), pp. 148–59.

as a religious leader, particularly among Najdis. His mistake was to respond to a religious issue with a defensive, political security tactic, instead of promoting his vulnerability as a religious leader, and capitalising on the threat which the Wahhabis posed to his religious power as Guardian of the Holy Cities. When Hussein refused to allow certain Najdis (i.e. Ikhwan) to perform the hajj on security grounds, the political significance of this refusal was immediately overwhelmed by its religious significance, and thus the situation created an important rationale for Ibn Saud to legitimise a Saudi entrance into Hijaz, since Hussein denied the religious rights of the Wahhabite state.

As for Ibn Saud's use of his religious authority during this period, he fully and successfully employed the Islamic model of the expanding *umma* to extend his authority into Hijaz. With the social-religious-political structures (the Ikhwan settlements) now firmly established, Ibn Saud could invoke the Islamic state model fully: "One factor in the emergence of a Saudi State undoubtedly lies in a religious call".[138] After Ibn Saud occupied the Hijaz, one reason for the smooth transition between Hussein's supreme authority and his own was the continuity of ideological acceptance of the *umma,* where the Hijazi ulema could eventually approve his take-over.

In making Najd cohesive, and heading the Wahhabi state, Ibn Saud had reached the absolute limit of his claim to religious and political authority. This worked against Ibn Saud's adoption of the *umma* model just as he was poised to enter the Hijaz. His ability to issue a fatwa throughout Najd was, according to Gertrude Bell, "sufficient proof of his religious authority in Najd".[139] Having reached this limit, he then wished to appropriate the title of "Protector of the Holy Places". According to the concept of the universal *umma,* his claim to authority was theoretically boundless: it was only his practical authority which was limited until his territorial boundaries began to expand. His religious authority would then be perceived as increasing to fit his hegemony. Meanwhile, from his territorial position in Najd he could not claim the same degree of international religious authority as a sharif could in his capacity as "Guardian of the *Haramain*".

138 Salamé, p. 211.

139 See note by G. L. Bell, Baghdad, 23 February 1920, L/P&S/10/391, Pts. 11 and 12.

To compensate for this drawback, he prepared for his expansion into Hijaz by encouraging religious proselytism there, having initiated a policy in eastern Hijaz in 1918 which resulted in the secession of whole districts from Hashemite rule. Thereafter, many tribes were converted to Wahhabism: the Bani Thur of Subai, Juhaina, Khararis, Shlawa, Utaiba and Kahtan.[140] The trend continued: Wilson reported in 1919, after meeting chiefs of Harb and Juhaina tribes, "I gather that the tribal situation in the Hijaz is far from satisfactory . . . The Harb confederation is now openly defying the authority of the King . . . the Kabyles of this confederation are now looking toward Najd for protection."[141]

Essentially the Harb wanted the protection of the sharif, but after the Khurma incident they realised that he was getting weaker, and became apprehensive about their powerful neighbouring tribe the Utaiba who, according to Wilson, had accepted the rule of Najd. The Utaiba were heavily proselytised by the Wahhabi *mataw'a* (religious mentors), and thus Ibn Saud won over large sections of Hussein's associated tribes.[142] The Harb had two options: either to side with the Utaiba, tolerating their domination and desertion to the Najd regime, or to withstand the Utaiba influence. That the Harb decided to ally with the Utaiba supports the contention that, while "most societies in the Middle East lack a homogeneous national population, the basic requirement of the externally imposed nation-state",[143] nonetheless religious belief encourages a traditional form of increasing tribal confederations, where a Muslim belongs to a universe which transcends the tribe.[144] More tribes continued to accept the leadership of Ibn Saud, for example the Ajman who had started migration south towards al-Hasa.[145] In July 1919 Hussein's son

140 Col Lawrence, *Arab Bulletin*, No. 96, 9 July 1918.

141 Col Wilson, Jeddah, to director, Arab Bureau, 11 February 1919, FO 686/1. At any rate one military observer noted following Abdallah's defeat at Turaba that "the majority of tribal elements which profess allegiance to King Hussein [are] absolutely unreliable." (*Arab Bulletin*, No. 112, 24 June 1919, "Report on the Khurma Dispute".)

142 Only three Utaiba sheikhs, without a large support base, still supported Hussein in 1920 (FO 686/18 L. L. Bright (Dera) to D.C.P.O. Damascus, July 10, 1919); see also Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, p. 63.

143 Tibi, p. 137.

144 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

145 Civil commissioner, Baghdad, to India Office, London, No. 4603, 15 April 1920, IOR/15/557.

Ali tried to combat Wahhabism by destroying the tribal headquarters of the Utaiba and Harb. Of particular importance was a new core of Wahhabite support in Mecca which Hussein first became aware of in August 1919. This was the nucleus of a steadily growing pro-Saudi constituency in the Hijaz which had connections with the ruler of Khurma.[146] By December 1920 one-third of the poor and one-half of the "better class" in Jeddah were reported to be sympathetic to Wahhabism. In eastern Hijaz by November 1920, a long list of tribal sheikhs supported Wahhabism; only three Utaiba sheikhs remained loyal to Hussein.[147] By May 1922, the religious and political loyalty of the populations of Medina and Khaibar had been completely transformed.[148] Such rapid and evident transformations of religious allegiance were characteristic of the method by which Wahhabism and Saudi power were spread throughout Hijaz.

Thus, Ibn Saud's final encroachment on Hijaz began much earlier through this creation of ideological enclaves which pegged territory to the Wahhabi state. In 1920 Ibn Saud attributed the rush of tribes wishing to fall under his banner to his insistence on the purest form of Islam, and the enforcement of shariah law to its fullest extent.[149] By his own account representatives of at least six major areas wrote to him, asking him to lead the new movement into new countries.[150] It was an astute political tactic to underplay his personal authority and emphasise the strength of his ideological appeal. Thus, ideological cohesion and Hijazi social consensus were encouraged toward Ibn Saud's desired concept of expanding the *umma.*

To initiate moves against Hijaz, Ibn Saud ensured religious sanction from his own domestic community and ulema to legitimise and motivate the encroachment through a common religious-ideological consent among

146 The group included the chief Qadi, the keeper of the holy shrine (al-Kaaba), and several merchants and was connected with the Hijazi agent in Cairo, a notable named Sharif Sharaf, and his Hijazi family (Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, p. 63).

147 L. L. Bright (Dera) to D.C.P.O. Damascus, 20 July 1919, FO 686/18.

148 See Batten to Curzon, 21 January 1921, L/P&S/10/926, P 2319; *Jeddah Report*, 11–20 January; Marshall to Curzon, 21 February, L/P&S/10/926.

149 See diary of political agent, entry for 5 February 1920.

150 *Ibid.*

his groups. Gertrude Bell noted that he had acted "not in his own name but over the signatures of 11 well-known Ulama", describing this as "a triumphant indication not only of his religious hold but also of his political circumspection".[151] Hussein's pilgrimage embargo offered Ibn Saud the ideal opportunity to extend his power, for it provided his groups with "the enemy" on which to focus their religious ideology and transform it into action.[152] Attacks against Hussein using doctrinal grounds as a political pretext became an excellent source of legitimacy for his rival.

Ibn Saud's entry into Hijaz was favoured by a very specific Islamic doctrine, "the general Islamic Mandate", which ordained that Mecca must at all costs be protected and the pilgrimage made available to all Muslims. The most singular political lever which Ibn Saud possessed was that the religious belief of his society required freedom of access to his rival's territory. This situation does not often occur in strategic situations. If one defines the religious duty of the sharif as "preserving the security of Mecca", that definition is complex, because it refers as much to providing universal access as to preventing a strategic intrusion.

For Ibn Saud, encouraging domestic motivation created a critical problem with regard to the timing of his entrance into Hijaz. He had difficulty restraining the Ikhwan because of their hostility and impatience, created in part by Hussein's embargo on the hajj. There was considerable social resistance from the Ikhwan to his alliance with a Christian foreign power and his deference to British policy. If Ibn Saud refrained from a response to the hajj embargo, his religious legitimacy and support from his associated groups would be rapidly affected,[153] and would destroy his crucial dimension of authority within the *imara/imama* (secular/religious) structure of the Wahhabite state.

The Ikhwan proliferation of power, relatively independent of Ibn Saud's authority, prior to his entrance into Hijaz put increasing pressure on Ibn Saud's authority and strategy since he was pushed to enforce the

151 See note by G. L. Bell, Baghdad, 23 February 1920, L/P&S/10/391, Pts. 11 and 12.

152 Keddie, "Post-colonial Muslim societies", p. 13.

153 FO to Major W. E. Marshall at Jeddah, 22 June 1922, L/P&S/10/926.

tenets of Wahhabi revival, particularly in the educational sector.[154] He therefore had to moderate his earlier practices of social control by replacing their religious instructors in the *hujar*. Ibn Saud used his other sources of support from his associated groups, mainly the ulema and the urban élites, to counter the internal Ikhwan challenge to his power. Additionally Ibn Saud used the tactic of invoking the consensual support of the religious authority, asking the senior Najdi ulema to issue a fatwa that "Ikhwanist" Islam should not supersede ordinary Wahhabi practice. His ploy was successful in weakening the organisation of the Ikhwan power throughout Najd.[155]

However, the activities of some of the Ikhwan still managed to distort Ibn Saud's passive policy regarding Hussein's embargo on Najdi attendance of the pilgrimage; pitched battles flared in 1922, including on the Asir–Hijaz borders, and had the effect of intensifying the Ikhwan discontent.[156] Clearly, it was in Ibn Saud's interest to enter the Hijaz before the Ikhwan pressure eroded his control of the operation altogether.

Before Ibn Saud took the final decision to enter Hijaz, he carefully established that this move was the result of communal religious sanction or consensus. On 4 June 1924 a meeting of tribal, military, religious and Ikhwan leaders was convened in Riyadh to discuss an Ikhwan petition for a campaign against the Hijaz. On 13 July he was again careful to muster and test public support at a religious and diplomatic convention of the Ikhwan and the ulema, and to extend that support internationally by circulating a "Green Book" which would explain the Saudi decision to the Muslim nations.[157] He urged restraint on his followers in the name of religious rectitude, as Toynbee claims:

154 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 108, 11 January 1919, report by Philby, "The Ikhwan and the Wahhabis"; see also H. Dickson to civil commissioner, Baghdad, 10 February 1920: extract of various notes (includes Ikhwan), L/P&S/10/391.

155 Report by Gertrude Bell (British official at Baghdad), 23 August 1920, FO 371/5061.

156 *Jeddah Report*, 11–31 May 1922, FO 371/7718.

157 The *Green Book* was circulated by the Najd government following the Kuwait Conference and basically summarised the proceedings, showing how uncooperative the Hashemites had been and how reasonable and flexible the Saudi administration was. A translation of the *Green Book* is in the Kuwait Conference Records, in political agent, Kuwait, to political resident, 17 May and 16 August 1924, R/15/1/595.

> however easy it might be for the Najdis to take Mecca and Medina by force from King Husayn, it would be both unwarrantable and impolitic for them to attempt this except as Mandatories of the Islamic world, since the Holy Cities were a common possession of all Muslims.[158]

When Ibn Saud began his expansion into Hijaz,[159] the first political problem he faced when his forces broke through to Mecca on 18 October 1924 was the insecure relationship between a leader's protection of the Holy Cities and his religious legitimacy. Fortunately for Ibn Saud's prestige, there was no Ikhwan massacre in the Holy City[160] – the consequences would have been disastrous – and Ibn Saud at once declared that no one would be prevented from performing the pilgrimage. Again, he chose to emphasise his authority as a Muslim imam.[161]

The Caliphate Committee telegraphed to Ibn Saud from India that Hussein and his sons must leave the Hijaz, that a constitution for the Holy Land "must be drawn up by the whole Islamic community" and that the area "must be placed under a democratic government".[162] On 16 October Ibn Saud declared himself in agreement with the Caliphate Committee's views, replying when Ali (who had by this time become king following Hussein's abdication)[163] sued for peace, that "Najd had no intention of annexing or dominating the Hijaz, but would leave the new regime in the Holy Land to be determined by the Islamic World. There

158 Toynbee, *Survey*, p. 297.

159 The entry of Ibn Saud's forces into Hijaz began on 29 August 1924 (Troeller, p. 217). Lengthy accounts of Ibn Saud's encroachment on Hijaz are found in Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 61–70 and Troeller, pp. 216–31.

160 Ibn Saud's forces entered Mecca, giving a declaration that no one would be prevented from performing the pilgrimage, nor would any of the residents or their property be touched (Bullard to FO, 14 October 1924, No. 4169, L/P&S/10/3665, Pt. 1).

161 On 5 December 1924 Ibn Saud himself arrived in Mecca.

162 Toynbee, *Survey*, p. 300.

163 Hussein's abdication is described later in this chapter. Ali summoned a meeting on 3 October of the leading men of Jeddah and Mecca, acting for his father. He said the King was prepared to resign if they thought that would improve the situation. The notables conferred and even telephoned and telegraphed Hussein "and asked him to abdicate in favour of Ali". (R. W. Bullard to foreign secretary, 11 October 1924, L/P&S/10/1124.)

would be no peace until both Husayn and his sons had left the country."[164] Ibn Saud, at his third congress[165] in Riyadh after his entrance into Hijaz, reasserted that "the sole purpose of the annexation of the Hijaz" was "to guarantee the liberty of Pilgrimage and to settle the destiny of the Holy Land in a manner satisfactory to the Islamic World".[166] Basing the legitimacy of his take-over on the fact that the Indian Muslims urged the eviction of the family of the blasphemous false caliph, Ibn Saud reiterated his "ban upon the entire family of Husayn".[167] His capacity to effect such a ban shows that his religious authority had reached its high point.

Postwar use of coercion by both leaders, 1919–25

The immediate cause of Hussein's demise lay in his poor management of his coercive arm, combined with his lack of dynastic or traditional tribal support, his inadequate techniques for mobilising support among his war-weary groups, and the generally poor military tactics and leadership of his sons as commanders. In this period, he had to start afresh to enhance the dynastic power of his military regime, and had to find some means, ideological or practical, to sustain the coercive participation.

In August 1921, T. E. Lawrence outlined the postwar military strength of King Hussein. Lawrence, whose general approach to the Hashemites was sympathetic, nevertheless observed that the organised defence forces of Hijaz were very weak: none of the main cities possessed more than a few hundred men at the most as a permanent defence (there were 40 men in Jeddah, 50 in Mecca and 500 in Taif). Hussein had 30 automatic rifles, some German Maxims and 60 mounted infantry. On morale, Lawrence commented: "troops are regularly paid but are underfed and dissatisfied . . . Taif Fort is strong but only rationed for two days. There are no artillerymen." Three hundred Ottoman-trained Syrian officers commanded certain "Meccans of little military value".[168] In addition to receiving poor pay, officers were accorded little respect

164 *Jeddah Report*, 21–30 October 1924, L/P&S/10/1124.

165 The third congress was a meeting to discuss Ibn Saud's new political status, with the *ulama*, the tribal leaders and urban élites.

166 Toynbee, *Survey*, p. 300.

167 *Ibid.*, pp. 303–4.

168 Col Lawrence, Jeddah, 2 August 1922, L/P&S/10/881.

by the ranks and he noted that the Meccans constantly quarrelled with their Syrian commanders. Lawrence concluded that the Wahhabis could overrun the Hijaz with 1,000 men.[169]

For several reasons, Hussein had not taken sufficient steps to repair his rapidly deteriorating defence structure. Long before the Khurma incident Hussein had been apprehensive about the Ikhwan activity and requested British support in advance of what he predicted might be a major incident, as was reported to Wingate in December 1918.[170] However, Hussein did not act upon his anxiety by building up his own coercive forces independently. Firstly, he lacked a personal grasp of military affairs to enable him to establish a strong military force. Secondly, with the Ottomans evicted, no enemy existed on which to focus his associated society's hostility. Thirdly, his dynastic authority lacked a self-generating source of coercive support, and finally, the all-out effort of revolt had undermined popular military resolve, while by contrast Ibn Saud's forces were fresh and ideologically motivated.

Hussein's forces entirely lacked the cohesive dynamic of loyalty. He had initiated the coercive support of his society on a financial basis but was unable to continue this; thus the cessation of military payments undermined his social support. He proceeded to destroy each of the two sources of revenue needed to pay troops properly. His non-cooperation with Britain encouraged the end of his subsidy, and through neglecting the administration of the pilgrimage he also lost his own independent internal revenue from the hajj. A year after the Turaba massacre, Abdallah openly attributed the destruction of the Hashemite army to his father:

> The Bedouin were tired of fighting after 3 years and would not come to his standard, and they had collected a good deal of money that they wanted to spend in comfort in their homes: despite this the King insisted on moving against Ibn Saud.[171]

169 Lawrence to foreign secretary, 2 August 1922, L/P&S/10/881, P3742.

170 In July 1918, following Hussein's attempt to obtain submission at Khurma, and following two complete defeats of Hashemite expeditions by the Ikhwan, the British government concluded "there was no comparison whatever between the military forces" ("Minutes of Interdepartmental Conference of Middle Eastern Affairs", 24 November 1919, L/P&S/10/390).

171 See Arab Bureau observations on Khurma dispute (*Arab Bulletin*, No. 112 of 24 June 1919).

The wartime payments to the Hijazi troops had had the adverse effect of exacerbating an avaricious mentality. Thus, increased financial incentives perversely eroded the tribes' respect for Hussein and encouraged them to stop fighting: "mercenaries are useless . . . in victory they become your masters".[172] Later, during Ibn Saud's encroachment on Hijaz, Ali's Palestinian forces threatened to stop fighting if they were not paid immediately, and eventually an open revolt broke out over payment.[173] Such a mercenary approach to coercive participation contrasts markedly with that of the Ikhwan who were not paid for specific battles but received a modest retainer.

Faced with empty coffers, Hussein made increasingly authoritarian efforts to impose conscription. Although before the revolt he and the tribes had united against Ottoman conscription, he now seemed to forget that his society was vehemently opposed to it. His autocratic demands for military service emphatically alienated his society because they bore no relationship to the ethos or interests of his group. His demands contrast strongly with the consultative approach which Ibn Saud took in mobilising his groups in this period. The *Arab Bulletin* reported in 1918:

> the Sherif hopes to enrol a new force in Mecca to retake Khurma, but is trying to conscript the town Bedouin at half-wages, and consequently has made no progress. Should he make further attacks on Khurma, with the materials at his disposal, he may reasonably be expected to suffer further reverses.[174]

In 1921 a British agent was forced personally to intervene to stop Hussein's police from forcibly conscripting Nigerian pilgrims into the Hijazi army,[175] and in the same year about 800 men from Mecca had reportedly fled to Yemen and to the Sudan to avoid conscription.[176] Hussein was still trying to raise conscripts in Mecca in 1922, but "two quarters stood to arm and said they would resist conscription with bloodshed".[177]

172 Machiavelli, quoted in Gellner, "Tribalism", pp. 123–4.
173 Jordan to foreign secretary, 20 November 1925, FO 371/10810 and 5 December 1925, L/P&S/10/1127.
174 *Arab Bulletin*, No. 96, 9 July 1918.
175 *Jeddah Report*, FO 371/6255.
176 Grafftey Smith to Curzon, 31 October 1921, *Jeddah Report*, 11–30 October, L/P&S/10/926.
177 British agent, Grafftey Smith to FO, 31 January 1922, FO 371/7711.

Hussein's manner of military recruitment lacked professional military acumen, particularly in the assumption that he could successfully pit an army of conscripts against the highly militant, focused Ikhwan forces.[178]

Moreover, while Hussein's military command was inadequate, Abdallah's was catastrophic: his initial tactical handling of the Khurma incident led to the complete decimation of the Hashemite coercive arm.[179] In initially occupying Turaba in May 1919 Abdallah provoked the Al Saud by looting, killing and boasting he would observe the fast of Ramadan in Riyadh. As commander he was responsible for his troops' welfare; yet before the Ikhwan raid there were claims that he retired to bed without placing any sentries on guard.[180] Thus although Abdallah tried to shift the responsibility for the Turaba disaster onto Hussein he was certainly immediately to blame:

> The whole affair has been most woefully mismanaged politically and strategically by King Hussein and Emir Abdullah, neither of them showed the rudest grasp of the elements of statesmanship, strategy or tactics.[181]

When Saudi forces entered Hijaz, it was again ineptitude of command which caused the early Ikhwan aggression at Taif in August 1924.[182] Sabri, the commander of 500 Hijazi soldiers, unwisely abandoned the town's solid fortifications to confront the superior Najdi force outside the town at Wadi Muharram.

By comparison, Ibn Saud's use of coercion was the factor which won him control of Hijaz and paramount leadership of Arabia. His society was less militarily and economically exhausted than Hussein's, and its enthusiasm, along with new centralised economic strategies of taxation,

178 Bullard to Chamberlain, 30 June 1925, No. 2565, L/P&S/10/1704.

179 The Ikhwan forces attacked Abdallah at night from three sides and destroyed Turaba completely (Vassiliev p. 297).

180 A note by Captain Garland on Khurma also claims that Abdallah had previous warning of a night attack ("Paper on Khurma dispute", *Arab Bulletin*, No. 112, 24 June 1919.

181 Col Vickery had talks with Hussein and his family, and they took the opportunity to express their growing grievances ("Extract from Intelligence and Political Report by Lt Col Vickery", British agent, Jeddah, 26 October1919 to 21 November 1919, L/P&S/10/391 Pts. 11 and 12.

182 Bullard to Ramsay MacDonald, 28 September 1924, No. 4232, L/P&S/10/1707.

encouraged its coercive participation. His entrance into Hijaz was possible only because he possessed superior might and shows again that the fuel for Ibn Saud's authority from start to finish had always been his coercive strength. From his initial capture of Riyadh, coercive power had always been Ibn Saud's means of initially obtaining de facto authority; his coercion was supported by his family's traditional role as amirs, his charismatic leadership and diplomatic acumen. Coercive force enabled Ibn Saud to assert his religious authority and expel his rivals from their age-old religious hegemony. His successful demonstrations of independent strength enhanced Britain's image of him as a leader, as shown in this forceful appraisal written early in 1920 by the civil commissioner at Baghdad:

> I regard [Ibn Saud] as by far the strongest man in Arabia at present, and least likely to lose his influence by reason of his attitude towards ourselves. I regard his goodwill as now even more important to us than that of King Hussein. Unlike the latter, he can and will maintain his position and authority, whether or not we assist, and is thus not liable to the loss of prestige which King Hussein has suffered by the mere fact of his depending on us.[183]

Ibn Saud alternately exaggerated the ferocity and pacifism of his Ikhwan force, according to the political image he wished to project, sometimes asserting that "300,000 rifle men" were at his beck and call; he had only to say "'Jehad' and the whole of Arabia would blaze",[184] suggesting that his adherents could barely be restrained.

Ibn Saud now had to shape this military energy according to his desire to take careful tactical control of his campaign to enter Hijaz. To secure legitimacy and ensure stable future relations with the conquered society, it was important for him to control his military tactics with unprecedented care, to curb the Ikhwan zeal. The controlled manner in which Ibn Saud used and coordinated his forces of coercion, his

183 Major H. R. P. Dickson, political agent, to civil commissioner, Baghdad, Hofuf, 10 February 1920, L/P&S/10/391, Pts. 11 and 12.

184 See diary of Bahrain political agent during a journey to Hasa and back, 29 January–20 February 1920, L/P&S/10/391. Yet Ibn Saud modestly claimed in a letter to Ibn Rashid that he had only 2,000 Ikhwan available to meet 11,000 Hijazi forces in 1918 (L/P&S/10/390, Pts. 9 and 10).

calculated use of strikes and restrained attrition tactics helped to project his encroachment as a legitimate act against a disorganised and religiously impure Hashemite regime.

Ibn Saud's tactics were assisted by the location of the Ikhwan camps which were strategically placed to attack from all the extremities of Najd,[185] enabling simultaneous attacks on the Hijaz perimeter at many points. The astute planning of the entrance into Hijaz is shown in the fact that three diversionary forces were dispatched northward to the Iraq and Transjordan lines and to cut the Hijaz railway. Supporting columns were also sent to Wadi Sirhan. These military diversions in the north had the objective of blocking, with a single tactical sweep, any broad counter-attack in favour of Hussein, either from the British or from Hussein's sons in the mandates.

Ibn Saud neither ordered or commanded the bloody Ikhwan raid on Taif in July, 1924.[186] He was deeply saddened when he heard about the massacre and promised the Taif inhabitants safety and protection. After this incident, so fearsome was the Ikhwan reputation that Mecca capitulated without a single gunshot, the mere threat of the Ikhwan sufficing to secure immediate surrender.[187] The tactic of the Taif massacre, once used, never needed to be repeated, for it substantially affected the psychological resistance of Hijazi society. The massacre was deliberately publicised by Hussein,[188] who hoped thus to undermine Ibn Saud's

185 al-Madani describes this deployment of settlements: (a) north-east sector, on the Iraq border; (b) north-west sector, at the Syrian border; (c) north Hijaz, along the Medina line, (d) south Hijaz, along the Medina line; (e) the reserve branch at al-Artawiyya (Muhammad Mughraybi al-Madani, *Firqat al-Ikhwan al-Islamiyya fi Najd* (no publisher given, 1923), pp. 43–5. See also Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 72.

186 Bullard to foreign secretary, 4 September 1924, L/P&S/10/1124 and Bullard to foreign secretary, 7 September 1924, L/P&S/10/1124 See also al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, pp. 331–4.

187 The surrender of Mecca is described briefly: "Khalid ibn Luwai [Lu'ay] had sent four of his Ikhwan dressed as pilgrims in white loincloths (*ihram*) to reconnoiter the town. They found a city tightly shuttered, waiting for the Ikhwan tempest to strike . . . [the Ikhwan] were not allowed to loot or plunder; since there was no resistance, there was no need to shoot or kill." (Habib, *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam*, p. 115.)

188 Bullard to foreign secretary, 12 September 1924 and Bullard to foreign secretary, 15 September 1924, L/P&S/10/1124.

legitimacy and support in Hijaz, but this strategy backfired and added to the intense collective mood of fear, and undermined resistance. After the forceful conquest of Taif, Ibn Saud adopted a different tactic of slow, long sieges of the important Hijaz towns. His peaceful occupation of the Holy Cities increased the legitimacy of his act, projecting it as a disciplined and relatively merciful conquest.

It eventually became apparent that Ibn Saud's encroachment on Hijaz would succeed, whereupon Hussein agreed to abdicate on 3 October 1924 and to take refuge in Aqaba, so that his son Ali could maintain a form of Hashemite rule which might be acceptable to Ibn Saud: thus, Ali became constitutional sovereign on 4 October 1924.[189] However, Ibn Saud was required to dispatch forces towards Aqaba in order to cut off the financial assistance which Hussein later sent to Ali in Jeddah. Britain's priority, however, was that Aqaba should be included within Transjordan, and that Ibn Saud should not acquire Aqaba by force. So Ibn Saud's advance on Aqaba exerted leverage on Britain to press for the evacuation and exile of Hussein to Cyprus.[190] This instance shows that it is crucial for a leader to maintain autonomous military forces, even to put pressure on his own allies, for here Ibn Saud's coercive power enabled him to use Britain as a lever to exile Hussein.

The Saudi decision to besiege Jeddah rather than to attack it directly was taken at a conference on 1 January 1925. Records indicate that Khalid ibn Lu'ay, sharif and former amir of Khurma, and Ibn Humayd a prominent Hijazi tribal leader, pressed for a direct attack, but the prudent decision to stage a siege was Ibn Saud's.[191] Here, he tailored his coercive tactics to the social composition of the target, Jeddah, where merchants were disenchanted with the Hashemites and thus likely to capitulate. Ibn Saud's choice also showed concern to protect Jeddah's many foreign nationals – in other words, to protect his foreign relations and international legitimacy.[192]

189 Bullard to foreign secretary, 11 October 1924, L/P&S/10/1124.

190 FO to commander of HMS *Cornflower* (anchored off Aqaba), 27 May 1925, FO 371/10812.

191 Colonial secretary to high commissioner for Iraq, 30 September 1924, L/P&S/10/1124.

192 High commissioner for Palestine to colonial secretary, 20 February 1925, L/P&S/10/1125, P460.

Therefore, when in March 1925 Ali's troops made four simultaneous and separate sorties from Hijaz, Ibn Saud refrained from counter-attack and sustained the attrition.[193] His restrained siege undoubtedly encouraged Jeddah townsmen to believe that capitulation would be met with mercy. Significantly, as the siege wore down Hashemite resistance, Ibn Saud made his political demands absolute. So complete was his control of Jeddah that by 22 June 1925 he was able to allow much of his army to withdraw and make the pilgrimage, notifying foreign representatives at the same time that "the siege of Jeddah [is] by no means abandoned".[194] The abdication of Hussein would not suffice: he desired the complete expulsion of the Hashemite family from Hijaz, declaring: "Neither King Hussein nor any of his sons can be allowed to exercise sovereignty over the Hejaz and anyone who keeps them so [does so] at his own risk."[195] However, while maintaining overt coercive pressure, Ibn Saud continued to claim that he had no intention or desire to occupy Hijaz, and that "the Hedjaz may be governed as it likes, or as the Mahommetan powers may choose, provided always that neither King Ali or any members of the Hashemite family remains in the country".[196] When Ali refused such demands, an open revolt broke out in Jeddah against him.

Ali then attempted to secure peace at any price, asking the British to mediate and arrange his abdication with Ibn Saud. The British government was exceedingly careful to distance itself from the Hashemites, although anxious not to embarrass them unduly (Britain did not publicise the most cringing of Ali's appeals, for instance), but told Ali that it could "only contemplate the possibility of intervention if both sides [were] ready to welcome [its] good offices".[197] Nevertheless before a week had passed the foreign office sent highly deferential instructions to Jeddah to negotiate with Ibn Saud. Although it was supposedly acting as mediator, Britain would also discuss mandates and outstanding Najdi territorial issues.[198] On 26 December 1925, as a result of successful diplomacy and general coercive supremacy, Ibn Saud entered Jeddah. After he entered

193 See Jeddah report for 12–19 March 1925, L/P&S/10/1126.
194 Jeddah to FO, 22 June 1925, L/P&S/10/1126.
195 Bullard to foreign secretary, 5 November 1924, FO 371/10015, E9634.
196 See *Letter of Proceeding*, HMS *Clematis* at Port Sudan, 15 March 1925, FO 371/10812.
197 FO to Jeddah, 4 July 1925, L/P&S/10/1126.
198 FO to Jeddah, 10 July 1925, L/P&S/1226.

Hijaz, he won the crucial support of the Hijazi ulema, who issued a fatwa sanctioning Ibn Saud's take-over of the Holy places and urged all Muslims to obey the new ruler. Although he seized power through coercion, he continued to deny that he was an aggressor in any sense in the Hijaz, choosing to underplay his personal authority. Here he contrasted with Hussein, who made vast claims to Middle Eastern territory without distinguishing the difference himself between his genuine desires and the goals a leader needs to profess in a propaganda war.

British relations with Ibn Saud and Hussein during Ibn Saud's encroachment on Hijaz

As described above, in August 1924 Ibn Saud began his final assault on the Hijaz territory and took Taif in September; by October the notables of Jeddah were clamouring for Hussein's resignation. In considering the role that foreign powers played in Hussein's decline, Britain's dogged neutrality during Ibn Saud's methodical appropriation of power in Hijaz must be seen as a major factor in precipitating his downfall. Britain's neutrality aided Ibn Saud's seizure of power and was based on an awareness of Ibn Saud's agenda for expansion. One British view, admittedly given with the benefit of hindsight, was that there was no doubt that, "from the time Hussein proclaimed himself 'King of the Arabs' [in 1916] Ibn Saud began to take measures undermining his authority".[199]

Hussein decided too late to negotiate with Britain. Only when the Ikhwan forces were entering Taif, on 24 September 1924, did he send a delegation from Mecca to the British agency asking for its intervention and assistance, but this was refused by Britain through the British agent in Jeddah.[200] However, another delegation composed of Ali Reza, Qaim Maqam of Jeddah, Muhammad al-Tawil, Sulaiman Qabil, and the mayor of Jeddah, declared that they would like to be included within some form of British mandate.[201]

However, in addition to Britain's growing indifference to Hussein's fate, the most important factor which precluded intervention was that, as a Christian power, Britain could not be seen to be involved "in any

199 FO Report, 12 October 1928, in CAB 16/93.
200 Al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, p. 343.
201 FO 636/295.

struggle for possession of the Holy Places of Islam".[202] *The Times* newspaper commented, "we warn the British government to desist from anything having the remotest semblance of such an attempt at intervention".[203] Hussein was duly informed that "[The British] intend to confine their efforts to an attempt to safeguard His Majesty's Government's Moslem Subjects."

Britain's dilemma related to a genuine security problem in India: because of the Caliphate Committee's agitation there, Britain could not risk sending Indian Muslim troops to their Holy Land, in case these forces transferred allegiance to Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan, possibly stimulating further unrest in India. More important to Ibn Saud's expanded authority was the speed with which Britain began to negotiate with him. It was Britain's concern for territorial security which made it imperative for it to treat with Ibn Saud, particularly when Ibn Saud dispatched a force to Aqaba. Ibn Saud understood that Britain aimed to have Aqaba recognised internationally as part of Transjordan. The British viewed Saudi claims on territories bordering Transjordan as a serious enough threat to warrant their involvement. Preventing a war between Ibn Saud and Abdallah, the ruler of the British mandate, was essential. The Saudi goal of securing Aqaba and Ma'an now critically affected Hussein's strategic position, because Hussein was in exile in Aqaba, and his presence there was one obvious motivation for the Saudi attack. It was therefore imperative to have him removed quickly and unceremoniously: Cyprus was chosen as a suitable place of exile.[204] Negotiations were initiated with Ibn Saud through the Clayton Mission, and the Hadda and Bahra Agreement, to secure Britain's territorial interests in the region for fear that Ibn Saud's expansion would turn

202 Colonial secretary to high commissioner for Iraq, 30 September 1924, L/P&S/10/1124, P3979.

203 *The Times*, 4 October 1924; see also Baker, *King Husain*, p. 205 and al-Rihani, *Tarikh Najd*, pp. 342–3.

204 "I do think it essential ex-King Husain should be got out with the least possible delay by 'invitation' if possible but otherwise if necessary." (Minute by A. C. [Chamberlain], 25 May 1925, FO 371/10808.) See also FO to Commander of HMS *Cornflower* (anchored off Aqaba), 27 May 1925, L/P&S/10/3665, Pts. 2, 3 and 4. Ibn Saud even had sufficient command of the situation to state in an interview on 20 June that these forces would not attack now that Hussein was leaving Aqaba (Jeddah to FO, 23 June 1925, L/P&S/10/1126).

on the northern Hashemite mandates.[205] This was where Ibn Saud's carefully tended reputation as a reasonable and consistent negotiator paid dividends, for the British knew him as a leader willing to compromise his own goals to secure limited sovereignty. Thus Britain decided to recognise the *fait accompli* of the Wahhabi encroachment on Hijaz, but to emphasise to Ibn Saud the importance of the safety of the pilgrimage and British residents in Hijaz.[206] In this way, these new agreements with Britain gave Ibn Saud's extended regime international recognition and legitimacy. Meanwhile, the last diplomatic function which Britain performed for the Hashemite state was to mediate in the surrender of Jeddah.

The collapse of Hussein's social support under Ibn Saud's encroachment

During Ibn Saud's entrance into Hijaz, Hashemite policies continued to stimulate the total collapse of the support of Hussein's associated society. Ali, military commander in a dramatically deteriorating financial position, under pressure from his troops for payment, accelerated the Hashemite decline by imposing heavy taxes on Jeddah merchants to establish a national bank in August 1925. The strange logic behind this was that in order to raise money to cultivate social support, he demanded the society's money.

When Saudi expansion began, neither the urban population nor the bedouin directly opposed it: they either fled or embraced it.[207] It was claimed that "the Wahhabi advance on Mecca caused as many as 15,000 of Mecca's merchants to flee to Jeddah.[208] Inevitably the Jeddah population was reminded of the wartime precedent of Medina – battered

205 Britain throughout 1925 made it its concern to assert control over Ma'an and Aqaba lest Ibn Saud be left in possession of certain areas which would allow him to threaten Abdallah's rule or prevent Transjordan from having access to the sea, thus also preventing Britain from landing troops when necessary.

206 Colonial secretary to political resident, 13 September 1924, No. 43017, CO 727/8.

207 The flight of Najdis is mentioned in Jeddah to FO, 9 February 1925, L/P&S/10/1126.

208 Bullard to foreign secretary, 17 September 1924, L/P&S/10/1124 and 2 October 1924.

endlessly by siege during the revolt, reduced to a fifth of its pre-war population. Jeddah capitulated more quickly because it was not physically, economically or psychologically healthy enough to sustain a siege as Medina had done during the revolt. A fear of economic stagnation and commercial standstill might inspire popular capitulation in mercantile Jeddah as much as any Ikhwan raid or a "genuine disgust at Hashemite malpractices."[209]

Not surprisingly, the first domestic pressure on Hussein to abdicate during the Saudi encroachment came from the merchant class, led by al-Tawil, Mecca customs director, on behalf of the Mecca and Jeddah notables, the "National Representative Council" (al-Majlis al-Niyabi al-Watani).[210] Their aim was to induce Ibn Saud to accept Ali's Hashemite rule instead of Hussein's. Throughout the early autumn, Hijazi pro-peace elements corresponded with Ibn Saud, as "an impartial body . . . only interested in the welfare and peace of the country".[211] Thus Hussein's associated society began the long process of negotiating a surrender. Ibn Saud's siege techniques and demands for complete power had managed, by February 1925, to create a "peace-at-any-price" party in Jeddah, which then sought to bring about Ali's downfall.[212]

> The population of Jeddah is sick of the whole thing . . . and ask for nothing better than the removal of Ali and the arrival of Ibn Saud. The squeezing of pilgrims is the only industry here and the war has stopped their year's income.[213]

The Hijazi inhabitants' conversion to the Najdi political movement, rather than to Wahhabism, was not explicitly ideologically motivated. Rather than adopting Ibn Saud's conception of an expanding *umma*, they simply wanted a stable existence and to escape the Ikhwan raids: "Why fight for a King we hate against a formidable enemy, when we may hope to conciliate [the] latter by calling ourselves Wahhabi?"[214] In January 1926, the notables pledged allegiance to Ibn Saud and proclaimed

209 Batten to foreign secretary, 21 January 1921, L/P&S/10/926.
210 See the petition of Hedjazi notables to consul Bullard in report of 11 October 1924, L/P&S/10/1124.
211 Bullard to foreign secretary, 4 October 1924, L/P&S/10/1124.
212 *Daily Telegraph*, 14 February 1925, Philby's article.
213 *Jeddah Report*, 21 May 1925, FO 371/10808.
214 Bullard to foreign secretary, FO 371/10014/E8046.

him "King of the Hijaz", as well as "Sultan of Najd and its Dependencies", and so Hussein's associated society formally affirmed the permanent end of Hashemite rule in Hijaz.

In the postwar period, Hussein's handling of political relations with Britain was extremely inadequate. Apart from his disagreements with Britain over the disposition of territory, the mandate system and the Balfour Declaration, his abstentions from negotiating a formal treaty had negatively affected Britain's lingering sense of responsibility for his security. Britain gave him every chance to formalise relations with it, but his refusal to negotiate remained essentially a protest against its limitations on his concept of his sovereignty; he thus undermined the security of his home territory, Hijaz.

Ibn Saud wisely recognised that postwar boundaries would be determined by the security interests of Britain. Thus, to secure international affirmation of his northern borders and his limited sovereignty, Ibn Saud compromised on the scope of his hegemony. The affirmation of his northern boundaries freed him to plan his expansion westward, and his flexibility in negotiations encouraged Britain's ultimate recognition of his rule in Hijaz. Ibn Saud's carefully calculated use of his coercive force ensured Britain's recognition of his extended sovereignty. By contrast, Britain's desire to secure Aqaba for Transjordan impelled it to exile Hussein from his own territory as a result of his failure to sign a formal treaty with Britain.

Hussein failed to perceive how his religious authority could be channelled positively and practically. By the end of World War I Hussein's strategic importance as a sharif had diminished for Britain, particularly in the light of his neglect of the pilgrimage and mishandling of economic resources. His transformation of his traditional leadership after the Arab revolt towards secular nationalism lost him further legitimacy as did his attempt to take over the caliphate from the Ottoman empire. This latter attempt to resurrect his religious prestige was a mistake, since neither international Muslim opinion nor the multi-ethnic inhabitants of Hijaz favoured an Arab caliph. Ultimately the force of Ibn Saud's Wahhabi revival simply overwhelmed the historic religious authority he had neglected.

In contrast, Ibn Saud used the central Islamic concept of expanding the *umma* to obtain collective religious sanction from his society and ulema, which enabled him to usurp the title of "Protector of the Holy

Places" and legitimately extend his religious authority. Hussein encouraged the Najdi encroachment on Hijaz by refusing the Ikhwan access to the pilgrimage. Despite this antagonism, Ibn Saud handled carefully his entrance into the Holy Places which increased his legitimacy.

Ibn Saud finally defeated endemic social fragmentation and constructed a more centralised cohesion, through a model which appealed to his society because it incorporated the traditional tribal ethos of consultative rule and selective tribal military autonomy along with religious ideals which motivated his newly engineered social enclaves of the Ikhwan.

Unlike his rival, Hussein failed to transform his tribes into a force permanently loyal to him, and consequently lacked a personal military arm to protect his sovereignty after the revolt. When he tried to enforce coercive participation through conscription, his militarily exhausted social groups turned against him. Britain absented his sons to rule its mandates, and thus prevented them from assisting their father militarily. Thus Hussein's lack of a cohesive, local, coercive force enabled Ibn Saud to expand the Saudi state.

Hussein's quest for a wider regional authority was undoubtedly eroded by external international relations, particularly by the Great Powers' strategic interests. However, Hussein's neglect of social needs and deteriorating social support demonstrates that Britain's worst influence upon his leadership was to change his perception of the harmonious concept of state he had formerly shared with his associated society. In adopting a pan-Arabist leadership, Hussein overestimated his limited postwar sovereignty. The breakdown of law and order was a sign that leader and society were ideologically at odds, that his society's expectations had now reverted to traditional customary norms of leadership. Hussein did not develop economic resources to replace British subsidies and made financial demands on the society which alienated it even further. When the Wahhabis entered Taif on 24 September 1924, he possessed little social loyalty to sustain him in power. This decay in Hussein's authority shows that the crucial factor in an Arabian leader's authority was the harmonious relationship between his own concept of the state, as a formal organisation of his political power, and the concept of a state which his associated social groups possessed. To succeed, a leader must possess the acumen to transform this harmonious vision into practical reality.

Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to compare the nature and foundation of the political authority of two leaders in different regions of the Arabian peninsula: Sharif Hussein of Hijaz and Ibn Saud of Najd. The effect of British intervention in the region during World War I has also been examined and related to the development and erosion of these leaders' respective bases of political authority. The analysis of these two leaderships has provided a means of examining the relationship between the ruler, who creates a formal structure of political power, and his associated society, through a systematic examination of the purposes and nature of governance and the forms of political authority upon which governance depends.

It is the final conclusion of this case study that three variables were needed to sustain an Arabian leader in power, namely: social consent, possession of coercive force and of traditional, religious authority. In order to sustain his authority, the leader needed to manage carefully the interplay of these variables, especially when they were affected by regional and international political dynamics which might encourage foreign intervention.

An examination of these leaders' traditional and religious authority has demonstrated the importance of these sources of authority to the enhancement of political power, and has also demonstrated the importance of their effective exploitation by Arabian leaders. Hussein's first period of rule (1908–13), which was his relatively successful period of governance, demonstrates that he understood the limits of his traditional and religious roles as sharif/amir and used them capably. He extended his traditional authority as amir, a leadership accepted on the basis of customary norm, to re-establish and reinforce the traditional judicial process, and the religious *de jure* fusion of his authority according to the Islamic concept that religious and political authority are inseparable. His role as arbiter or intermediary with the tribes was recognised socially; their relative "unthinking submission" enabled him to exert a certain power over them. He greatly emphasised his religious right to rule as sharif, based on blood descent, to take advantage of the concrete power which Islamic

titles offer Arabian leaders. He was thus "an authority", accepted on the basis of *scientia,* or religious wisdom. He exploited the tension between traditional and religious norms and the CUP's modernising efforts, and thus attracted societal consent to his rule.

Hussein used his religious authority less effectively in his second period of rule (1914–18). His position as sharif enabled him to make short-term power gains and to win independence from the Turks. His religious legitimacy and ability to invoke jihad became strategically important when World War I broke out, and won him British support and assistance; thus, his religious authority offered him practical benefits. However, ideological opposition to his siding with a "Christian power" damaged local and international perceptions of his religious legitimacy, which he further undermined by poor administration of the hajj and by raising the contentious issue of an Arab claim to the caliphate.

In Hussein's third period of rule (1919–24), the religious authority he had carefully established in his initial period of rule was completely eroded. He did not project his religious authority effectively, for he had transformed his authority from a religious-political identity to pan-Arab leadership, and he continued to neglect the pilgrimage. He was unable to counter the immense pervasive impetus of Wahhabism, as exemplified in his handling of the religious aspects of the Khurmah dispute, which demonstrated clearly how the spread of religious ideology made strategic encroachments on his sovereignty. His subsequent claim to the caliphate was an ill-judged move to re-affirm his religious authority and compensate for lost prestige, since he was claiming a religious authority beyond that which he naturally possessed, and international Muslim opinion did not recognise his right. The policy which was most practically erosive to his religious legitimacy was his prevention of Najdis from attending the pilgrimage, since access to the pilgrimage was fundamental to his legitimate function as sharif of Mecca.

Hussein also managed his traditional authority badly, since his focus had shifted away from sustaining traditional rule. Thus he imposed autocratic and superficial modernising changes upon the old processes of governance, neglecting the socially-accepted traditional processes which would sustain his rule, such as the creation of power confederations, and the satisfactory adjudication over social groups' interests. Thus, he did not sustain either his religious or traditional authority, and destroyed a fundamental source of his power.

In contrast, during his first period of rule (1902–13), Ibn Saud did not solely exploit his religious authority to acquire control of Najd. He substantially exploited his traditional authority and right to rule: his seizure of power exploited the fact that his family had a tradition of governing Najd since the time of the first Saudi realm (1745–1818), a claim whose authority had won him support from loyal Najdi social groups. In acquiring power he drew on certain customary norms of indigenous leadership: the assertion of power through raiding and the orchestration of tribal coalitions to satisfy mutual interests. However, his traditional claim to rule was countered by endemic social fragmentation and by the persistent refusal of groups such as the Shammar, the Ajman and the people of al-Qasim to recognise his traditional right to govern.

In his second period of rule (1914–19) Ibn Saud began to exploit substantially his religious authority, and the religious legitimacy of his title proved decisive to his contest for power. He used it in a discreet and pervasive way which did not attract international attention or opposition from the world Islamic community. Through his encouragement of the Ikhwan movement, he spread a proselytising ideology and promoted the ideological concepts of obedience, settlement, jihad and purification to boost his political power. His emphasis on the religious legitimacy of his right to rule created his society's conviction that compliance was right. Thus he legitimised his control over Najd and its resistant social groups. His force was transformed into right and compliance into duty. He gained religious legitimacy by avoiding overtly opposing the Islamic Ottoman empire, but cleverly at the same time benefited materially from his formal alliance with a "Christian power". His utilisation of a religious ideology through the Wahhabi revival effectively reinforced his traditional authority because he presented political change as traditional norms in a manner which follows Weber's model of traditional rule. He also exploited the traditional consultative process of *ulama-umara* to legitimise his strategies with *de jure* authority. Furthermore, he retained much of the traditional tribal power system which his society recognised and accepted within his innovatory centralising cohesive structure. Therefore, by reinforcing his religious and traditional authority, he secured the social sanction for his power by styling himself as a leader who embodied the shared beliefs of his social groups. Thus, from being a leader "in authority", he became "an authority".

In his third period of rule (1919–24), when he entered the Hijaz, Ibn Saud successfully utilised both his traditional authority and his religious

authority. He sustained his dual traditional authority first as amir/imam, satisfying the traditional interests of Najdi society. He used the cultural predisposition towards Islamic purification in order to attract groups outside his hegemony and to provide legitimising grounds for his encroachment on the Hijaz. Further, Ibn Saud used the religious judicial process of consultation from the Najdi ulema, to legitimise his territorial expansion and thereafter successfully projected himself as the peaceable protector of the Holy Places.

In sum, Hussein's initially effective use of religious and traditional authority declined over these three periods. In responding to the events of war and revolt and adjusting to the postwar scope of his power he did not seem to understand that these forms of authority, which his limited title embodied, were an essential bedrock of his practical power. Thus he did not project his rule as legitimate according to these forms of authority. In contrast, Ibn Saud used traditional and religious authority with increasing effectiveness, by emphasising his religious authority to gain territory, consent, and legitimacy, and by sustaining a traditionally sanctioned model of expanding power, the Islamic *umma*. In this way Ibn Saud reinforced the foundations of his rule through his firm understanding that traditional authority was an essential criterion for power in Arabia and that Islam was the most prominent legitimising ideology in Arabia.

Coercion is essential to authority in preserving and extending sovereignty; monopoly over the means of coercion is essential to the "power theory of sovereignty". Coercion is thus another essential criterion of Arabian leadership and is needed to support a leadership based on traditionally accepted custom. The coercive capacities of each leader differed greatly in their first period of rule. Hussein was placed in power with access to the Ottoman military structures of Hijaz, at a point when the tribes were troublesome, independent coercive forces which offered him no coercive support. He astutely managed these coexisting coercive systems, which reflects Weber's observation that the traditional ruler in the early stages of governance contracts out coercive roles to distinct agencies. He used the Ottoman forces to control the tribes and cleverly used his traditional role as arbitrator to modify tribal coercive practices, increase the security of trade routes, and accumulate the tribes' consent to act as his military arm. By exploiting social opposition to the Ottomans' domination and modernising reforms, Hussein orchestrated coercive tribal confederations to affirm his power, and this strategy showed his

understanding that his coercive power had natural limits. Thus, he made a realistic use of his limited coercive resources to make modest power gains. However, his increasing coercive power made him a threat to the Ottomans, increasing the likelihood of his removal from power. His use of coercive resources also endangered his control, as the Ikhwan rebellion shows. From this early period, his lack of a substantial coercive arm proved that he could not sustain independent power.

His essential coercive weakness encouraged him to rely on external assistance through an alliance with Britain which ultimately proved unprofitable. The revolt seemed to demonstrate an unprecedented coercive cohesion behind his leadership but in fact the tribes were not militarily loyal to him; rather they were acting according to their own agenda which was to evict the Turks. The revolt exhausted Hussein's social resources of coercion and increased the tribes' independence by supplying them with munitions and money.

In the post-war period, Hussein had not converted the forces of his revolt into a disciplined, cohesive force to protect his limited postwar sovereignty. He ignored his society's vehement opposition to conscription, and his attempts to acquire coercive force in this way drastically undermined his local support. His military forces were inept in protecting his security, which led to the decimation and defeat of his forces at Khurmah. The ferocious reputation of Ibn Saud's Ikhwan further undermined Hijazi society's coercive resistance, and this, along with deteriorating economic conditions and Ibn Saud's exhausting siege tactics, led to their acceptance of the end of Hashemite rule.

In sum, although Hussein tried before World War I to build an effective coercive force, he showed a lack of foresight in expending military energies in the revolt without using this opportunity to create a new military force loyal to him. Since he lacked the natural or personal credentials, and the political acumen, to build himself an enduring coercive force, he thus lacked one of the essential criteria for sustaining an Arabian leader's authority.

In contrast, during Ibn Saud's first period of rule, he used coercive force as a means of securing political power, for he was not placed in position by appointment. He waged exhaustive campaigns to secure recognition of his traditional right to rule. However, Najd was a uniquely fractious, warring tribal society, and thus the most important basis of his authority was always a de facto power which he established, reinforced

and expanded through the use of coercion. However, waging war did not win him sustained control over his society because coercion in Najd was a continual system or norm which undermined his control over resistant factions. However, the capture of al-Hasa showed that his coercive capacity was invaluable in securing him first of all British willingness to negotiate and later a British alliance.

By adding a religious dimension to coercive norms in Najd, Ibn Saud managed to channel anarchic social practices to fulfil his aims. By adding the ideological impetus of jihad and purification to the tribes' ferocity, he engineered creation of a coercive force loyal to him over a sustained period. It was his integrated use of coercive norms with other tribal, social norms which enabled him to build a coercive capacity to protect his limited sovereignty in Najd and expand it into other territories. By controlling and timing the Ikhwan's appetite for expansion, he entered the Hijaz in a legitimate yet forceful manner. It was his coercive ability to threaten British interests in Aqaba which was the deciding factor in encouraging Britain to negotiate and formally acknowledge the end of Hussein's rule. Thus, Ibn Saud's sustained development of a coherent military force ultimately secured Britain's recognition of his authority over Hijaz. So it can be said that, in practical terms, coercive capacity is the essential criterion which sustains an Arabian leader in power.

Coercive capacity requires the society's consent to participation in military action, and this case study has shown that one of the crucial variables which sustains an Arabian leader in power is the society's acceptance of his authority. The leader wins such recognition by proposing socially acceptable forms of government and satisfying societal interests. An ethos of mutual obligation exists between ruler and ruled which generates societal obedience. The prevalence of *maslaha* (self-interest) in Arabia requires an adjustment to Weber's description of traditional rule, for in Arabia, consent on customary grounds is modified by the society's constant re-evaluation of the ruler's satisfaction of its interests. In the first period of his rule, Hussein cleverly acquired societal consent by projecting himself as the traditional, religious leader whom his society accepted. He satisfied societal interests by improving his administration and the security of trade routes, which commercially benefited many of the leading groups of his society. He also satisfied Hijazi society in opposing the Ottomans' domination and reforms which had threatened the society's traditional economic norms and freedom.

Hussein's initiation of the revolt also satisfied his groups' interest in evicting the Ottomans. The society's seeming adoption of Hussein's nationalist agenda was actually a "consensus on pretext"; his boosted support was also derived from the financial incentives and munitions that Britain provided. However, distribution of these financial incentives also undermined his society's motivation to protect his sovereignty militarily. His claims to titles such as "King of All Arabs" which his society did not accept, for in general they were Muslims first and Arabs second, eroded their sense of obligation to him. Moreover, the erosive economic effects of wartime hardship and blockade, with the inefficiency and capriciousness of his administration, undermined his society's interests and alienated various groups in his society.

In the postwar period, Hussein showed that he did not have a clear perception of the importance of social consent to the foundation of his authority. He neglected his society's economic interests, imposing taxation and asking for loans from the merchants. By failing to focus on administering his specific hegemony, he lost considerable local popular support. He neglected the pilgrimage, which was economically important to his society, and failed to fulfil his society's expectations and perceptions of him as a religious authority. Evidently Hussein's concept of rule by that time differed greatly from that acceptable to his associated society, which was ideologically alienated and economically and militarily exhausted. Thus Hussein lost one of the most important foundations of his authority, his society's sense of obligation and consent.

Ibn Saud, in his first period of rule, was not able to acquire cohesive societal consent, due to the exceptionally fragmented social forces of Najd. He acquired certain groups' obedience through coercive force, but such support continually broke down because of the warring norms of his territory and because he did not transform enforced obedience into a legitimate sense of duty. Strong self-policing agencies thus created a weak central agency for his rule, for he could not make certain powerful tribes accept his sovereignty – many of them recognised the Al Rashid as the supreme authority.

In his second period of rule, Ibn Saud obtained a greater social recognition of his right to rule because his religious ideology transmitted new frameworks of social identity. He thus encouraged his groups to forego the norms of rapid loyalty transfer, *asabiyya* and materialistic raiding, in favour of a fusion of modest material and moral rewards. By

using religious indoctrination, he refocused his society's perceptions of its interests, which encouraged it to accept his centralised rule.

His social groups' acceptance of his model of an expanding state motivated them to support his encroachment on Hijaz. Other social groups outside Najd had also adhered to his political authority because of the ideological appeal of his religious revival and because these groups possessed a greater affinity with his model of Islamic state than with Hussein's proposed pan-Arab leadership. Thus, it was crucial to Ibn Saud's victory in his contest for authority in Arabia that he established a broad basis of social consent for his rule throughout the entire region. The affinity between the ruler and ruled was the most profound source of authority for Ibn Saud's Arabian leadership, which won him the Hijaz society's obedience in exchange for the "peace, safety and good of the people".

This book has demonstrated that these Arabian leaders' effective use of the natural variables of their authority were affected by foreign intervention. For example, during World War I, Hussein's religious authority over Islam's most important territory precipitated the intervention of Britain. Britain's communications with Hussein were extremely misleading in that they implied that his postwar leadership would have an extended, pan-Arab scope. However, Hussein must take the responsibility for having overreacted to these vague suggestions and for having ignored the clear indications within the Hussein–McMahon correspondence that France's interests in securing Middle Eastern influence would prevail over his own. Nonetheless, Britain's communications precipitated a change in Hussein's perception of the scope of his leadership, which remained fixed. Britain encouraged him to adopt an ideological agenda (pan-Arab nationalism), which was unsuitable for the practical scope of his power. Britain imposed an alien concept of nation-state on a heterogeneous urban society. This supports the notion that one of the chief characteristics of foreign intervention is to transform the ideological norms of the country affected. Britain's ideological targeting therefore obscured Hussein's recognition of his true sources of authority.

However, Hussein did not respond well to the opportunities offered by foreign intervention. He proved inflexible in adapting to the postwar strategic needs of the Great Power and repeatedly rebuffed Britain's attempts to treat with him, which would have formally protected his postwar sovereignty. Therefore, while British intervention precipitated

a distortion in Hussein's perception of his sources of authority, his own handling of foreign relations was stubborn, unrealistic and contributed to his fall from power.

In contrast, Ibn Saud initially had few advantages to offer Britain, and it was only when he acquired the strategically significant territory of al-Hasa that he secured recognition and the negotiation of a treaty with Britain. Ibn Saud responded wisely to the opportunities which British intervention offered. He avoided involvement in British wartime strategies which would have alienated his society, such as blockade, yet he managed to secure significant British subsidies and munitions mainly on the promise of his support. Further, his treaty with Britain contained clauses which later proved crucial in protecting his sovereignty and legitimising his subsequent encroachment on Hijaz. He demonstrated a consistency and flexibility during postwar negotiations on boundaries which encouraged Britain to accept him as the new ruler of Hijaz.

Ibn Saud differed from Hussein in that he did not allow British intervention during the Arab revolt to drain his military capacity or distort his understanding of his sources of authority. His strategy for expansion was ideologically independent and derived from an indigenous rather than alien ideological model of rule. Ibn Saud's fixed sense of purpose shows that an astute local leader with relatively modest resources can withstand the negative ideological effects of foreign intervention and fully exploit the advantages of foreign alliance.

To take a broader view, this study has demonstrated that foreign intervention could support an Arabian leader in power, or place him in power in the short run, but could not sustain his power in the long run if the leader lacked the minimum requirements, namely a power base and coercive force, to practise a socially acceptable form of rule. In this sense, British intervention acted mainly as a catalyst to precipitate the inevitable fates of these leaders, decided ultimately by their ability to sustain their respective societies' consent.

The study of Ibn Saud's rise to power and Hussein's decline enables a general conclusion to be drawn about the nature of authority in Arabia during this period. The crucial factor which secured any leader's authority was the harmonious relationship between his concept of the state, as a formal organisation of his political power, and the vision of a state which his associated social groups possessed. The society's obedience and consent were the crucial practical indicators of his authority, as was his

acumen and capacity to realise in practice this harmonious vision of the state. Ibn Saud succeeded because he developed a finely-honed clarity of vision in a religiously-devout society. It was this mutual affinity between Ibn Saud and his extended social groups which provided the necessary social consent to end over one thousand years of Hashemite rule. He established himself, after years of struggle and solid statesmanship, as the paramount authority in Arabia.

Appendix

British officials frequently referred to in the text (1914–1924)

Batten, Maj W.: Acting Jeddah Political Agent, 1919.

Bell, Gertrude: Arab Bureau staff, mainly resident at Basra.

Bell, Maj Gen Sir A.: Aden Political Resident, 1914.

Bullard, R. W.: Consul in Jeddah, 1924.

Bray, Capt N. N. E.: Bahrain Residency staff (Government of India), 1918–1919.

Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. Austen: Secretary of State, Government of India, 1916.

Cheetham, Sir Milne: Secretary of Cairo Agency, 1914.

Clayton, Brig Gen Gilbert F.: Director, Cairo Intelligence Agency [*sic*] (i.e. Arab Bureau) from 1916.

Crewe, Most Hon. Marquess of: Secretary of State for India in Council [this is different to Government of India].

Crowe, Sir Eyre: Assistant Under-secretary, Government of India.

Cox, Sir Percy Z.: First Resident, Persian Gulf, and also, from 1916: Chief Political Officer, Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force.

Dickson, Maj H. R. P.: political agent, Bahrain, 1919–20.

Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward: Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1914.

Hardinge, Rt. Hon. Lord, of Penshurst: Under-Secretary of State for Government of India in 1917, previously Viceroy and Governor-General.

Jacob, Lt Col H. F.: Political Resident, Aden, 1916.

Kitchener, Field Marshall the Rt. Hon. Viscount of Khartoum: Agent and Consul-General, Egypt, 1914–15.

Knox, Maj S. G.: Political Agent, Muscat, 1914.

McMahon, Lt Col Sir A. H.: Foreign Department Secretary, Government of India, in 1914; then High Commissioner to Egypt from December 1914 to 1916.

Mallet, Sir L.: India Office Under-Secretary of State.
Parker, Col: British Representative at Jeddah, 1916.
Shakespear, Capt W. H. I.: Political Agent, Kuwait, 1909–14.
Shipley, A.: Jeddah Agent, 1914–15.
Shuckburgh, J. E.: India Office, London.
Storrs, Ronald: Acting Oriental Secretary, Cairo from 1909.
Sykes, Col (Sir) Mark, M. P.: Cabinet Committee from 1918, Acting Adviser on Arabian and Palestine Affairs.
Vickery, Lt Col: British Agent, Jeddah, 1919.
Wilson, Col: British Representative at Jeddah, 1916.
Wingate, Gen Sir F.: High Commissioner, Egypt, 1917–19.

Arab Bureau staff
Clayton, Brig Gen: Director.
Cornwallis, Maj K.
Hogarth, Lt Cdr D. G.: Head of Arab Bureau.
Jacob, Col H. F.
Lawrence, Col T. E.

Military staff
Murray, Sir Archibald, GOC, Egypt.
Symes, Capt G.

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Political Agency, Bahrain
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Foreign Office (FO) Records

Embassy and Consular Archives, Turkey (FO 195):
FO 195/2376, 2320, 1255, 2126, 2286, 2350, 2452, 2455

Confidential Print, Middle East (FO 424):
FO 424/227, 229, 231, 232, 238

Embassy and Consular Archives, Egypt (FO 141):
FO 141/813/3551(Relations of Ibn Saud with Arab chiefs), 814 (Imam Yahya and Hussein, 1919), 460, 734, 468

War of 1914–18: Jedda Agency Papers, 1913–1925 (FO 686):
FO 686/11, 111, 7, 9, 69 (Boundaries/Territorial, Khurma, Aqaba and Ma'an, Taif)

Arab Bureau Papers (FO 882):
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Colonial Office: Middle East Correspondence

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CAB 27/23, 22 (Arabian policy, 1917)

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Most of the material in these collections of private papers also appears in the files of various government departments. However, these papers occasionally contain important private letters which are not available elsewhere. The following collections have been of some value, particularly for the views of the Egyptian and Indian officials in 1915–16 on the question of the Sharif Husain and the Arab revolt in the Hijaz.

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Lord Hardinge: Vol. 94.

School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham:
Sir Reginald Wingate: Files 135/3, 135/5-6, and 139/6.
Sir Gilbert Clayton: Files 469/8 and 470/2.

British Museum, London:
A. Wilson's papers.

Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford:
H. R. P. Dickson's papers.
H. St John Philby's papers.

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